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**Mandeville in Italy: the Italian Version of the
Book of John Mandeville and its Reception
(c. 1388-1600)**

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Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Italian Studies

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Summary

This thesis examines the Italian version of the *Book of John Mandeville* and its reception in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although the *Book* has been the subject of much critical investigation, the Italian redaction of the text has been largely ignored. Similarly, previous research into the reception of the *Book* has focused largely on its circulation in northern Europe. This study therefore aims both to bridge a gap in Mandeville studies and to make a valuable contribution to scholarly understanding of the circulation of vernacular literature in the Italian Renaissance.

Research has been conducted along two principal lines. A close material analysis of surviving manuscript and printed copies of the *Book* has allowed the influence of individual actors on the text's highly mutable content and form to be charted, revealing their specific attitudes and concerns. In addition to this, a broader survey of the *Book*'s influence on vernacular and Latin literary production in a number of genres has provided further evidence of Mandeville's cultural impact.

Following an Introduction that gives a more detailed analysis of the study's scope, methodology and structure, Chapter 1 offers a broad overview of the Italian text and its manuscript and print circulation. The four following chapters each address a key theme in the *Book*'s reception, combining analysis of surviving manuscript and printed copies of the *Book* with a survey of its cultural impact. A Conclusion draws together these individual themes, offering some general considerations of the *Book*'s impact on Italian Renaissance culture and the place of the Italian version within the broader Mandeville tradition.

Conventions

Editions of the Book of John Mandeville

This study refers to a number of different editions of the *Book of John Mandeville*, a ‘multi-text’ of a complex and varied nature. Generic references to the *Book* follow Ian Macleod Higgins’ *The Book of John Mandeville with Related Texts*: a readily accessible English translation based on the French Continental and Insular versions with notes and appendices pertaining to the various textual redactions. In the absence of a definitive critical edition of the Italian version of the text I refer to Mantua, Biblioteca Teresiana MS 126, the least corrupted extant manuscript, and the *editio princeps* issued in Milan in 1480 by Pietro da Corneno. For the French Continental text, I refer primarily to the transcription of Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Nouv. Acq. Franç. 4515 published by Malcolm Letts in *Mandeville’s Travels: Texts and Translations*, vol. II. This belongs to the same ‘Paris’ group as the first French manuscripts to circulate in northern Italy, from which the Italian translation was made.

Transcription conventions

Transcriptions from vernacular manuscripts, documents and printed books have been silently expanded. Where a page has been marked or damaged but reading is reasonably clear, expansions are given in square brackets. In instances where reading is unclear, suggestions are placed in square brackets with an accompanying question mark. I distinguish between ‘u’ and ‘v’, but not ‘i’ and ‘j’. I have silently modernized punctuation.

Transcriptions from Latin primary sources are silently expanded where meaning is clear. Medieval endings are preserved, while -e and -ae endings are not distinguished and ‘v’ is modernized to ‘u’ where appropriate. Abbreviations for ‘et’ are expanded. Where meaning is unclear or expansion is tentative, suggestions are placed in square brackets. I have silently modernized punctuation with the exception of marginal or other annotations, which remain unpunctuated.

Naming conventions

Mandeville’s account has circulated in numerous languages under an almost infinite number of names. In English, it is perhaps best known as *The Travels of John Mandeville* – a title that is not only misleading, since the journey it described never took place, but which has only been in use in the last two centuries. In Italy, it has been known as an *itinerario*, a *tractato*, and a *compendio*, to name but a few variations. This thesis follows the relatively recent convention of referring to the text as the *Book of John Mandeville* (abbreviated to the *Book*): a title that encompasses the text’s many differing versions and forms without privileging one above the others.

Just as modern scholarship has revealed little about the original version of the *Book*, much of our knowledge of its author remains largely conjectural. It is unknown whether the writer was indeed the ‘Sir John Mandeville’ he claims to be (although many have argued that this is unlikely), leading scholars to adopt a number of ways of differentiating between the *Book*’s unidentified author and his narrative voice. In this

study, the term 'Mandeville' is used to refer either to the author of the *Book* or, in an abstract sense, to the text itself. 'Sir John' refers specifically to the narratorial voice and character of Sir John Mandeville within the text.

Well-known place names (such as Jerusalem or Constantinople) are given in their modern English form. For more obscure locations, I use the commonly accepted English renderings of Mandeville's toponyms with a modern equivalent provided in parentheses. Although many of the exotic locations within Mandeville's imaginative geography can be identified with real world sites (such as Silha, sometimes identified with modern-day Sri Lanka), the *Book's* descriptions of these are founded on centuries-old traditions, often with little grounding in factual report. In such instances, the original name is maintained.

Abbreviations

<i>TBJM</i>	Higgins, Ian Macleod, <i>The Book of John Mandeville with Related Texts</i> (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2011)
<i>BAV</i>	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
<i>BNCF</i>	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

For ease of reference, I follow the abbreviations for French manuscripts of the *Book* given by Röhl:

<i>Mi</i>	Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana MS 816
<i>Mo</i>	Modena, Biblioteca Estense MS Francese 33

Manuscripts of the Italian version are referred to according to the abbreviations followed by Rossebastiano and Pellecchia:

<i>FL</i>	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashb. 1699
<i>FR</i>	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1917
<i>FN</i>	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Magl. XXXV 221
<i>LBL</i>	London, British Library MS Add. 41329
<i>MaC</i>	Mantua, Biblioteca Teresiana MS 126
<i>MiA</i>	Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS H 188 inf.
<i>MoS</i>	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS Ital. 1009
<i>NN</i>	Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale MS XII D 57
<i>NYP</i>	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS Morgan 746
<i>OB</i>	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. C. 252
<i>KK</i>	Lawrence, Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library (University of Kansas) MS C. 20
<i>PP</i>	Parma, Biblioteca Palatina MS Parm. 1070

As there is no such precedent for manuscripts of the Vulgate Latin redaction, I employ my own abbreviations:

<i>Belluno</i>	Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliniana (Seminario Gregoriana) MS 39
<i>Oxford Latin</i>	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. A. 187
<i>Milan Latin</i>	Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS D 46 Inf.

For a full list of the manuscripts of the *Book* discussed in this thesis, see the Appendix.

Word count: 78, 494 words.

Introduction

The *Book of John Mandeville* is one of the most intriguing works of medieval literature. Presented as the recollections of an English knight-errant, it is part guidebook for the Jerusalem pilgrimage, part exhaustive description of the Eastern world, allegedly set down on paper in the 1350s following three decades of extensive travel. In reality, Sir John's journey is a carefully crafted fiction, pieced together from a wide range of sources by an erudite and often entertaining author of unknown identity. Blending mythological and scriptural notions of the East with the reports of the most recent travellers, the *Book* offered its readers something that a genuine account could not: an image of the world that conformed precisely to their expectations. Alongside the typically medieval concerns of pilgrimage, kingship and morality, we find others that are strikingly modern: the ideological clash between Islam and Christianity, the rise of an economic and military superpower in China, and the possibility of tolerance in a world increasingly aware of its own religious and cultural diversity.

A forgery it may have been, but the *Book* went on to become the most widely read work of travel writing of the Middle Ages, read throughout Europe in numerous languages in manuscript and later print: a true literary phenomenon, the popularity of which would only begin to wane in the late sixteenth century as global exploration revealed its inaccuracies. What marks the *Book* out from other vernacular 'bestsellers', however, is the diversity of its audience. Over a period of two hundred years, the text was read by monarchs and nobles, priests and pilgrims, scholars, merchants and ordinary laypeople. They approached and reacted to it in an extraordinary number of ways, exerting their own influences on the physical forms that the *Book* took and its broader cultural impact.

The principal aim of this study is to explore the fortune of the *Book* in the Italian peninsula during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Recent years have seen Mandeville scholars increasingly turn their attention towards the *Book*'s audiences, yet the story of the Italian translation and its readers remains overshadowed by the more prominent English, French and Latin redactions. In Italian literary and historical studies, Mandeville is often eclipsed by such luminaries as Marco Polo, Odoric of

Pordenone and Niccolò de Conti, genuine travellers to the East whose own accounts circulated widely. Through a material analysis of surviving manuscript and printed copies of the *Book*, coupled with a broader survey its impact on Italian cultural production, I aim to shed light on the rich Italian Mandeville tradition and its impact on the way in which Italians across the social strata thought about the wider world.

Scope

The *Book* can in many ways be seen as a pan-European text. Not only does our lack of knowledge concerning the identity of its author make it difficult to assign to any particular national canon, but the vast number of textual redactions, each with their own variations and emphases, has led modern scholars to conceive of the *Book* as a 'multi-text': a work defined by the multiplicity of voices alongside that of the original author. Given this, it might well be suggested that to limit a study of its reception to an individual geographical area or to a specific version of the text is to fail to recognize the fluidity of medieval textuality and textual circulation. In this section, I seek to briefly justify the geographical and temporal limits of the present study, and comment on its approach to the *Book* in its multiple forms.

To refer to Italy at all in this period is, at least to a degree, anachronistic, since the collection of city states and kingdoms within the Italian peninsula had no shared political affiliation (indeed, much of the time quite the opposite). Yet there was also a longstanding understanding of a shared Italian identity and historical and cultural heritage, which in the fourteenth century was resonantly expressed in different ways by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. Moreover, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw a growing sense of linguistic unity that reached its apogee with the *questione della lingua* and Bembian reform, which paradoxically took place in a climate of concern over foreign threats and anxiety over political fragmentation. References to 'Italy' in this study should be understood as comprising the entire Italian peninsula including the Spanish kingdoms of Naples, Sicily and Sardinia, although, as the first chapter of this thesis will explore, the *Book's* circulation was largely limited to the northern and central states.

In chronological terms, this study begins at the date of the earliest recorded circulation of the *Book* in Italy and ends with the turn of the seventeenth century.

Although this period covers the entirety of the text's popularity, it would be mistaken to assume that this was uniform. The accuracy of Mandeville's account was often questioned and after the peak of its print production around 1500 its popularity gradually declined. Equally, it should be stated that the *Book* continued to be read in Italy into the seventeenth century and beyond, albeit less widely and by readers with a skeptical attitude. I have elected to conclude my study at 1600 for two principal reasons. Firstly, this allows us to examine its reception in the Counter Reformation, a period of profound religious upheaval which had major implications for the ways in which the *Book* was read. Secondly, as a result of increasing levels of literacy, the sixteenth century offers much of the most compelling evidence for the interaction of Italians of lower social status with the *Book*. The period of a little over two centuries covered in this study has been chosen so as to allow us to examine the peak of the *Book's* popularity and to consider the breadth of its readership.

The study focuses primarily, although not exclusively, on the Italian version of the *Book*. Textual multiplicity is a key feature of Mandeville's European dissemination, and where other versions of the text are therefore crucial to the wider picture of the *Book's* circulation in Italy, particularly in manuscript form, they are discussed accordingly. With the advent of print, it was above all the Italian vernacular version that was read; five Latin editions were printed between 1483 and 1589, none of them in Italy, and there is only limited evidence of an Italian readership for the Latin text. Similarly, relatively little attention is paid to the fortune of the Italian version beyond the peninsula.

Methodology

My approach to this study has been informed by a number of critical perspectives, chiefly within the field of reception studies. This term is employed to refer to a broad range of theoretical and methodological approaches to literary texts that have developed over the past half-century, becoming increasingly prevalent within mainstream historical and literary scholarship. Such approaches share a common understanding that meaning is present not (or not only) in a text itself, but is created by the encounter between text and reader. This notion is by no means a new one — similar concepts have long existed, for example, in aesthetic philosophy—but the

recent trend stems largely from the work of German and American literary scholars of the 1960s and '70s, most notably the *Rezeptionästhetik* of the Constance School and North American 'reader-response' criticism.¹ Perhaps the most significant effect of this trend for literary historians has been an increasing focus on readers and their interaction with texts within a specific historical context. The work of scholars such as Roger Chartier and Robert Darnton has been particularly influential in this respect, underlining above all the importance of the material form that a text took on the ways in which readers approached and comprehended it.² Other important contributions to the development of this 'history of reading' include the work of Gérard Genette on paratexts, the factors which 'frame' a text both on a page and within a broader social context; the studies of Malcolm Parke, Michael Clanchy and others on medieval literacy; and, more broadly, what has come to be known as the 'material turn' in cultural history, bringing with it a renewed focus among scholars on manuscript and print codicology.³

Reception studies has increasingly influenced the study of the literature of the Italian Renaissance, although it should be noted that its principles have been more enthusiastically embraced by Anglophone scholars than their Italian counterparts. Peter Burke, Daniel Javitch, William J. Kennedy and Simon Gilson, among others, have explored the intellectual and popular reception of contemporary vernacular texts, while Rhiannon Daniels and Kenneth Clarke have situated assessments of the reception of Boccaccio and Dante in a book-historical context.⁴ The study of medieval

¹ In Germany, Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser were fundamental to the development of the *Rezeptionästhetik* of the Constance School. In North America, Jauss and Iser are placed alongside Stanley Fish and Norman Holland as proponents of 'reader-response criticism'.

² Important contributions include Roger Chartier, *L'ordre des livres. Lecteurs, auteurs, bibliothèques en Europe entre XIVe et XVIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Alinéa, 1992); Roger Chartier, 'Labourers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader' in Andrew Bennett ed., *Readers and Reading* (London: Longman, 1995), 132-49; and Robert Darnton, 'History of Reading' in Peter Burke ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 156-86.

³ See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, third edition)

⁴ Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's 'Cortegiano'* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of the "Orlando furioso"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); William J. Kennedy, *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Simon Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2005); Rhiannon Daniels, *Boccaccio and the Book: Production and Reading in Italy, 1340-1520* (Oxford: Legenda, 2009); K. P. Clarke, 'Taking the Proverbial: Reading (at) the Margins of Boccaccio's *Corbaccio*', *Studi sul Boccaccio* 32 (2010), 105-144; idem., 'Leggere il *Decameron* a margine del codice Manelli' in Gian Mario Anselmi, Giovanni Baffetti, Carlo Delcorno and Sebastiana Nobili eds., *Boccaccio e i suoi lettori. Una lunga ricezione* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2013), pp. 195-207.

and Renaissance travel accounts has often been motivated more by an interest in the cultural impact of such texts than an appreciation of their literary value, and recent scholarship has increasingly seen the adoption of these principles. Scholars such as Rosemary Tzanaki and Marianne O'Doherty have approached the issue of reception through combining the material analysis of manuscripts with a more traditional approach to literary criticism, whilst Christine Gadrat's recent *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen Âge* (2015) explores the European readership of Marco Polo along similar lines.⁵ In parallel with the increasing incorporation of reception studies into mainstream literary criticism, recent scholarship on Mandeville has emphasized the ways in which audiences read and responded to the *Book*. The studies of Rosemary Tzanaki, Susanne Röhl and others have explored this multiplicity of approaches to the text: as a pilgrimage account, a source of geographical or historical information, a romance entertainment or a theological meditation.⁶ Such works have set an important precedent for the methodological approach adopted in this thesis.

The material turn in literary history has brought with it a recognition of the value of marginalia as an artefact of the reading process.⁷ Perhaps more fundamentally, marginalia can also be interpreted as physical evidence of the reader turned author, rewriting a text in accordance with their own interests and priorities. As John Dagenais succinctly puts it, marginalia are the means 'by which medieval people transformed one manuscript into another'.⁸ Around sixty per cent of the surviving manuscript and printed copies of the *Book* consulted in the course of my research

⁵ Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences: a Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville (1371-1550)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Marianne O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West: Thought, Report, Imagination* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); eadem, 'The *Viaggio in Inghilterra* of a *Viaggio in Oriente*: Odorico da Pordenone's *Itinerario* from Italy to England', *Italian Studies* 64, 2 (2009), 198-220; Christine Gadrat, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen Âge: traduction, diffusion et réception du Devisement du monde* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

⁶ See in particular Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*; Susanne Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2004); and Ladan Niayesh, ed., *A Knight's Legacy: Mandeville and Mandevillian Lore in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

⁷ Important contributions include John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the "Libro de buen amor"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Books in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and Heather Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). On note taking as a scholarly and pedagogical practice, see in particular Ann Blaire, 'The Rise of Note-Taking in Early Modern Europe', *Intellectual Historical Review*, 20, 3 (2010), 303-316 and eadem, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁸ Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading*, p. xvi.

contain marginalia of some kind.⁹ In conjunction with more traditional philological analysis, I have sought to recognize the place of annotations, symbols, marks and illustrations as sources for the attitudes of the *Book*'s Italian readers.

A degree of circumspection is, however, necessary when dealing with marginalia from this period. Dating annotations is a notoriously tricky task, particularly when they are written in Italian hands, and it is often difficult to assign notes to anything more specific than a given century. With the exception of scribal glosses, which tend to be written in a hand similar (if not identical) to that of the body of the text, it can also be difficult to ascribe marginalia to any specific reader without the aid of marks of ownership or other distinguishing features. In order to avoid these pitfalls, I have only included marginal evidence where I am certain that it was produced within the chronological boundaries of this study, and only assume identity (either of a named individual or a member of a particular social group) where there is supported by clear evidence.

Further to these concerns, a broader question must be addressed concerning the value of marginalia as evidence for reader response. Whilst it is clear that marginal notes provide some evidence of the reading process (a question that is addressed convincingly in the literature referenced above), it is also evident that not all are of equal value to the literary historian concerned with reconstructing the attitudes of the reader. In his study of annotated manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*, Carl James Grindley sets out an elaborate typology of annotations, noting that only one of his three broad categories can be 'directedly associated with the various texts that the [volume] contains'.¹⁰ More recently, and perhaps more productively, Rhiannon Daniels has identified five individual categories of marginalia that 'reveal the presence of the reader and suggest varying approaches to the process of reading and the status of the book'.¹¹ These include: 1) marginal notes pertinent to the text; 2) marks and symbols, such as crosses or manicules; 3) notes unrelated to the text; 4) illustrations; and 5) corrections and amendments. There is perhaps a broader

⁹ William Sherman suggests that between sixty and seventy per cent of incunables bore some sort of annotation (Sherman, *Used Books*, p. 9).

¹⁰ Carl James Grindley, 'Reading *Piers Plowman* C-Text Annotations: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300-1641' in Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo eds., *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower* (Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 2001), pp. 73-142; p. 77.

¹¹ See Daniels, *Boccaccio and the Book*, p. 33-4.

discussion to be had about the best approach to categorizing marginalia (and indeed the value thereof), although this is not the place for it. However, it is appropriate to briefly mention some of the principles that have guided my approach in this thesis. Firstly, regardless of the direct relevance of marginalia to the text, they are of relevance insofar as they help to reveal the context in which it was produced and read. Secondly, marginal notes must be read, as they were written, in the context of the individual and philologically unique codex that prompted their conception. Finally, it is important to remember that whilst a note in the margin of a book can be considered to be broadly indicative of a reader's opinion, it cannot be taken in isolation to accurately represent the sum of their interests, concerns and beliefs.

In addition to written evidence, other material factors (such as the presence of paper watermarks, the binding of a manuscript with other texts or the format in which a book is printed) have also provided valuable insights into the context in which books were produced and read. What is important here is the multiplicity of actors and their motivations: from the unknown author via the translator to individual scribes, rubricators, patrons, printers, correctors, editors and readers, each of whom accessed the *Book* in a form influenced by their predecessors and who left their own indelible mark on its shape. I have consulted all extant manuscripts and partial manuscript copies of the *Book* known to have circulated in Italy, primarily in Italian but also in Latin and French.¹² Although the sheer number and widespread distribution of extant printed copies makes an exhaustive consultation near impossible, I have examined the vast majority of those held in European libraries and many of those found in North American institutions; those beyond my reach doubtless have their own intriguing stories to tell.

Beyond extant copies, I have also sought to chart the *Book's* dissemination and reception through a broad range of secondary source material. Library catalogues, bookshop inventories and other documents have offered valuable information concerning ownership and distribution. I have also sought out references to and borrowings from the *Book* in literary texts produced in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: from pilgrimage accounts to epic poems, treatises on the natural world, allegorical visions and satirical letters. The sheer volume of literary production during the Italian Renaissance has required this to be a selective survey, and I have

¹² For a complete list and brief description of each manuscript, see Appendix.

therefore focussed my attention on certain genres and groups of texts that my preliminary research indicated to be potentially fruitful. The material discussed herein, however, represents a broad range of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century vernacular and Latin textual production.

Structure

Following an introduction to the Italian text and its manuscript and print circulation, the four remaining chapters of this thesis each deal with a key theme in the *Book's* reception, combining analysis of surviving manuscript and printed copies of the *Book* with a broader survey of its cultural impact. Chapter Two deals with approaches to the *Book* as a pilgrimage text, exploring its circulation among Italian pilgrims, its impact on the genre of pilgrimage accounts and its connections with the devotional practice of virtual pilgrimage. Chapter Three explores the influence of the text on Italian fiction, from romance epics to imitation travel accounts and satirical writing. Chapter Four examines Mandeville's influence on Italian notions of the marvellous East, examining the *Book's* dissemination amongst merchants and travellers, questioning its impact on scholarly geographical thought and exploring the ways in which Italian printers marketed the *Book* as a popular text in the Age of Discovery. The fifth and final chapter deals with attitudes towards religion, addressing readerly interest in Eastern Christianity, Islam, Judaism and pagan religion, as well as the fortune of the *Book* during the religious reform of the late sixteenth century. The Conclusion draws together these individual themes, offering some general considerations of the *Book's* impact on Italian Renaissance culture and the place of the Italian version within the broader Mandeville tradition.

Dividing readers into discrete groups in this way is by no means unproblematic. As this thesis will demonstrate, individual readers approached the *Book* in complex and nuanced ways, their principal interest moderated by a curiosity regarding the text's broader content. Similarly, the themes of pilgrimage, romance literature, geography and theology are closely intertwined within the *Book* itself. My decision to consider each of these themes individually is motivated primarily by a desire to explore the rich variety of ways in which Italian readers approached and

reacted to the text. The consideration of pilgrimage and theological concerns in individual chapters is intended to distinguish between devotional approaches to the text and a pattern of readerly interest in religious diversity, whilst the chapter dealing with geographical matters brings together a range of quite different readers. The divisions between these themes are by no means impermeable, and it should be noted that in many cases the readings of individuals or broader groups fall between two or more of these categories. It is my hope, however, that this structure allows for an exploration of some of the key patterns in the *Book's* Italian reception and their evolution over time.

Chapter One: The Italian Mandeville

Whilst the name of Marco Polo holds a privileged place in the history of travel and exploration, the figure of John Mandeville was arguably more important in the Western medieval imagination. The *Book of John Mandeville* was the most widely circulated travel account of the late Middle Ages and indeed occupied a place among the most important works of vernacular literature. Translated into at least ten European languages within fifty years of its composition, it survives in some 300 manuscripts: a figure double the number of extant copies of Marco Polo's *Le Devisement du Monde*, and comparable to vernacular bestsellers such as the *Roman de la Rose*. The *Book*'s success is made all the more remarkable by the longevity of its appeal, attested by the eighty (or so) editions printed across Europe before 1600. For a period of over two hundred years, this privileged position ensured that the *Book* exerted an important influence on the ways in which Europeans conceived of the eastern world.

Although there is a strong tradition of scholarship on the prominent English, French, German and Latin redactions, the Italian version of the text has remained largely ignored, dismissed by some Mandeville scholars as a 'minor' redaction and overshadowed in Italian literary studies by the canonical figures of Marco Polo and Odoric of Pordenone. In spite of this, there is evidence that the *Book* circulated widely in northern and central Italy. Alongside a modest corpus of twelve surviving manuscripts, the *Book* was printed in eighteen Italian editions between 1480 and 1567. As elsewhere in Europe, the *Book*'s varied subject matter and popularity at the moment of the print revolution meant that it was consumed across the Italian social strata: courtiers, merchants, humanist scholars, monks and nuns, and even Carlo Ginzburg's famous heretical miller, Menocchio, all read the text. As the historian of pilgrimage Franco Cardini observes, 'in un certo senso, "Giovanni da Mandavilla" è un autore italico: o, almeno, il suo testo appartiene al patrimonio delle memorie di viaggio in volgare del nostro paese'.¹ This chapter presents a brief introduction to the

¹ Franco Cardini, *In Terrasanta: pellegrini italiani fra medioevo e prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2002), p. 225.

Book's context and content, followed by an overview of the Italian version of the text and its fortune across manuscript and print.

Sir John Mandeville: an absent author

The *Book* presents itself as a guidebook for the Jerusalem pilgrimage and as an account of lands further to the east, the work of a knight from St Albans who left England in 1322 and travelled extensively in Asia before returning to record his memories in the mid-1350s. Long considered a testament to one of Europe's pioneering travellers, by the mid-sixteenth century increasing knowledge of the world beyond Europe led many readers to question its veracity; in 1605, the playwright Ben Jonson could refer to a deceitful character as a 'she-Mandeville', confident that the connotation would not be lost on an English audience.² Yet it was ultimately the discovery that the *Book* was based almost entirely on other works that sealed its reputation as a forgery and revealed that 'Sir John Mandeville, knight' was not who he claimed to be. The moral outrage of nineteenth-century commentators – one of whom memorably accuses Mandeville of attempting to “‘out-Herod” Herodotus’ – is, to a degree, understandable.³ The *Book* is not the account of a real journey, nor even the memoirs of a genuine traveller supplemented by wider reading; it instead draws on a wide range of textual sources, expanding and reworking their content to create a unique fictitious itinerary. Rather than being seen as mere plagiarism, this should be understood in the context of the prevalent medieval practice of *compilatio*, whereby preexisting material was restructured as a means of gaining *auctoritas*.⁴ Although the

² Karma Lochrie, *Nowhere in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p. 218.

³ See in particular Malcolm Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book' in J. J. G. Alexander and Margaret Gibson eds., *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 115–41; and Alastair Minnis, 'Late Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Role of the *Compiler*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 101 (1979), 385–421.

⁴ In the preface to the *Sententiarum*, Bonaventure distinguishes between the roles of the *scriptor*, *compiler*, *commentator* and *auctor*, stating that a compiler 'scribit aliena addendo, sed non de suo'. Bonaventure, proemio, q. 4, concl. in *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), I, 14–15: 'Quadruplex est modus faciendi librum. Aliquis enim scribit aliena, nihil addendo vel mutando, et iste mere dicitur scriptor. Aliquis scribit aliena addendo, sed non de suo; et iste compiler dicitur. Aliquis scribit et aliena et sua, sed aliena tamquam principalia, et sua tamquam annexa ad evidentiam, et iste dicitur commentator non auctor. Aliquis scribit et sua et aliena, sed sua tamquam principalia, aliena tamquam annexa ad confirmationem et debet dici auctor'.

Book's claim to be the account of an eyewitness traveller may seem at odds with this, the epilogue refers to its narrator not as an author but as a compiler.⁵

The author of the *Book* is thought to have consulted around thirty individual texts in the course of his research. Foremost among these are the accounts of two genuine travellers to the East: the German monk William of Boldensele's *Liber de quibusdam ultramarinis partibus* (1336), an account of its author's pilgrimage to Egypt and the Holy Land; and the *Relatio* (1330) of Odoric of Pordenone, a Franciscan friar who spent a decade in China and India as a missionary. These two works provide the foundation of the *Book's* itinerary and much of its content, which is often presented in greatly modified form and supplemented by material drawn from around thirty other texts. These encompass a wide range of genres: the medieval encyclopaedic tradition, from Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologiae* to Brunetto Latini's *Livres dou Tresor* (1260s); scriptural and religious writings, such as Jacopo da Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (c. 1260) and William of Tripoli's *Tractatus de statu Saracenorum* (1273); historical treatises, including Jacques de Vitry's thirteenth-century *Historia Orientalis*; and literary works that were widely accepted as historically accurate by medieval readers, such as the *Letter of Prester John* (late twelfth century) and the *Alexander Romance*.⁶ Each of these genres profoundly influences the *Book*, resulting in a text that mirrors the diverse interests of an author whose travels took place on the page.

Although the prologue goes into great detail regarding the identity of its author, no trace of a real Sir John has ever been found. Various theories have been advanced in recent scholarship: Mandeville has been variously identified as the Liégeois historian Jean d'Outremeuse (d. 1400), the Benedictine monk Jean le Long of Ypres (d. 1383), and an unnamed English nobleman who purposefully circulated his fictional account on both sides of the English Channel.⁷ As intriguing as the debate concerning the *Book's* authorship is, it is largely irrelevant to this study. Research on the text's reception has revealed that contemporary readers were

⁵ *TBJM*, p. 185: 'And I John Mandeville abovesaid... have compiled these things and put them into writing, such as I can remember, in the year of grace 1356, in the thirty-fourth year since I left our countries'.

⁶ For a full list of sources, see Christiane Deluz, *Le livre de Jean de Mandeville, une 'géographie' au XIVe siècle* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988), pp. 428-91.

⁷ For a good recent overview of critical opinion concerning Mandeville's identity, see Anthony Bale ed., *The Book of Marvels and Travels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. x-xvi.

sometimes sceptical regarding the marvels that Sir John reported, but rarely (if ever) questioned his status as a traveller and reporter.

The Book of John Mandeville

To speak of the *Book* as a singular ‘text’ at all is somewhat misleading, given the variation between, and even within, its different versions. The Italian redaction is one branch of a complex and heterogeneous tradition that developed from three early textual redactions. The French Continental and French Insular versions, both produced within the first decade of the *Book*’s existence, can be distinguished by their dissemination: the former circulated primarily on the mainland, prompting Spanish, Italian, Dutch and German translations, whilst the latter was limited to the British Isles and generated a number of English and Latin redactions. The Interpolated Continental or Liège text, produced in that city around 1390, spawned a number of further reworkings of the *Book*, most notably the Vulgate Latin redaction, which was read widely across Europe.⁸ This section offers a brief overview of the Continental versions of the text. It is not intended as a comprehensive critical analysis – this can be found elsewhere – but rather as a means to introduce readers less familiar with Mandeville to the *Book* and its key themes.

The *Book* opens with an address extolling the value of the Holy Land and lamenting the apathy of the rulers of Christendom towards its conquest, a burst of Crusade rhetoric that to the modern reader may seem at odds with Mandeville’s often-noted open-mindedness. The reader is introduced to the first-person narrator, ‘I John Mandeville, knight’, who gives a specific date for his pilgrimage to Jerusalem (1322) in a prominent authorial voice that serves both to legitimize the account and, crucially, set expectations as to its content.⁹ Having referred to the Holy Land in terms of the medieval paradigms of Crusade and pilgrimage, Sir John recalls his

⁸ The most thorough study of the *Book* in its multiple forms is Ian Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The “Travels” of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). See also Deluz, *Le livre de Jean de Mandeville*.

⁹ As Higgins notes, the prologue is of further interest in the Continental and Insular versions of the text since it is one of the few passages in which the voice of the original Mandeville author remains unaltered (*Writing East*, p. 28).

travels through lands further east, remarking on the diversity of their inhabitants, laws and customs and promising to ‘describe some part of the things that are there... according to what I remember’. The *Book*’s pious pilgrimage account and subsequent description of the marvellous East are often construed as largely independent from each other, yet here both are framed here in the context of the text’s overriding theme, termed by Ian Macleod Higgins as ‘a concern with the relationship between territory and Christian history, or, more generally, with the earthly *place* of Christianity’.¹⁰ It is a theme that is developed in myriad ways throughout the text.

The first part of the *Book* guides the reader on the journey from England to Jerusalem. Although this is based primarily on William of Boldensele’s account of his pilgrimage from Constantinople to the Holy Land via Egypt, Mandeville substantially alters his source. Where the *Liber* is a highly personal report regularly punctuated by anecdotes of William’s experiences, the *Book* is less an account of Sir John’s ‘journey’ than an encyclopaedic portrayal of the Mediterranean and Middle East, rich in local lore and biblical history. In contrast to the majority of contemporary pilgrimage accounts, Mandeville gives no indication of the length such a journey will take and offers little practical information for would-be travellers. Indeed, the narrative follows so many turns and digressions that there is little sense of itinerary. The description of Constantinople makes little reference to the city’s geographical location; instead, there is a lengthy list of its relics, followed by an exposition of the differences between Greek and Latin Christianity. The reader is also provided with a representation of the Greek alphabet – the first and most accurate of six such reproductions, which become increasingly fantastical.¹¹ This is followed by an important narratorial statement, which justifies the inclusion of such diverse material:

Although these things have nothing to do with showing the way [to Jerusalem], they are nevertheless relevant to what I promised to explain: a part of the customs, manners, and diversities of some countries. And because this is the first country varying from and disagreeing with our country over here in faith and in writing, I have therefore included it so that you might know the

¹⁰ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 33.

¹¹ Mandeville’s alphabets have multiple functions. Acting as a form of visual *mirabilia*, they also serve as evidence for his journey and punctuate the text. See Higgins, *The Book of John Mandeville with Related Texts*, pp. 266-9.

diversity that exists between our belief and theirs, for many people enjoy and take pleasure in hearing foreign things spoken about.¹²

Mandeville's rationale reaffirmed, the augmented pilgrimage account continues into Egypt, where Boldensele's description is supplemented by an array of historical and marvellous material. Particularly noteworthy is the replacement of the *Liber's* invective against Islam with a neutral historical account of the Mamluk Sultanate, based primarily on the works of Jacques de Vitry and William of Tripoli. Returning to more traditional material, the *Book* describes the pilgrimage to the monastery of St Katherine on Mount Sinai before entering the Holy Land proper. Here again Mandeville's interpolation and creative reinterpretation of Holy Land lore and religious *mirabilia* mark a radical departure from Boldensele's account. Brief descriptions of Bethlehem and Hebron pre-empt an account of the holy sites of Jerusalem, which is dominated by the description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The importance of this location is underlined by details that contextualise it within Christian history, from the discovery of Adam's head in the mortice that held the cross to the tombs of the crusaders Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I. The repeated assertion of Jerusalem's position at the geographical centre of the world, which is underscored by a number of verifying instances, underpins Mandeville's religious geography and is returned to later in the *Book*.¹³ The diversity of Eastern Christianity, another recurring theme, is addressed here with descriptions of the various groups of Christians present in Jerusalem.

Having described the holy sites around Jerusalem and presented a number of alternative routes from Europe to the Holy Land, the *Book's* description of the Biblical east closes with a developed account of Saracen belief and a remarkable description of a meeting between Sir John and the Sultan of Babylonia. Based in part on William of Tripoli's *Tractatus de statu saracenorum*, Mandeville expounds the differences and similarities between Christianity and Islam before using the Sultan as a mouthpiece for criticisms of Christian immorality and political infighting. Proximity of belief between the two religions is used to argue in favour of Christian expansion

¹² *TBJM*, p. 15.

¹³ Higgins, 'Defining the Earth's Centre in a Medieval "Multi-text": Jerusalem in *The Book of John Mandeville*' in Silvia Tomasch and Sealy Ann Gilles eds., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 29-53.

through conversion, with Mandeville's narratorial voice contrasting sinful Christendom with the 'good, faithful' Saracens, who 'entirely keep the command of their holy book'. The section concludes with a description of the life of Mohammed and a transcription of the Arabic alphabet.

At this point the *Book* turns its gaze further to the east, with the narratorial voice of Sir John signalling a change of focus:

Since I have described for you and spoken above about the Holy Land [...] now it is time, if you like, to speak about the neighbouring lands, the islands, and the diverse animals and diverse peoples beyond these boundaries. For in that country over there, there are many diverse countries and man great regions...

Unconstrained by the conventions of pilgrimage writing, Mandeville takes a markedly liberal attitude towards his chief source, the *Itinerario* of the Franciscan missionary Odoric. The substantial reworking of his account and introduction of swathes of new material results in a guide for the prospective traveller that is clearly intended primarily to entertain the static reader. The range of Mandeville's interests is shown in the following pages, with the description of a wish-granting fairy at the Castle of the Sparrowhawk in Armenia, the story of a monk's journey to recover a relic from Noah's Ark, and a brief treatise on the virtues of the diamond following in rapid succession. As before, precise details of the itinerary are of secondary importance, with a clear emphasis on the reporting of *mirabilia* and the diversity of eastern lands. This is particularly the case as the *Book* turns its gaze towards the 'Indies', since antiquity the stock location for exotic tales of the marvellous East.¹⁴ Whilst Mandeville includes the usual descriptions of monstrous races, pagan religions and unusual funeral rites, his representation of such marvels is a far cry from the deliberate exoticizing of his contemporaries, often showing a proto-ethnographic interest. The dog-headed Cynocephali, described by Pliny as vicious and barbaric, are praised as rational beings of good understanding; pagan pilgrims in southern India, whose ritual suicide is denounced by Odoric as wicked idolatry, are instead lauded for

¹⁴ On medieval representations of the Indies, see in particular Marianne O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West: Thought, Report, Imagination* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

their devotion. There is further mention of Eastern Christianity with references to the Church of St Thomas, who was widely believed in the Middle Ages to have brought the Gospel to India in the first century, and the attribution of a miracle to a relic of his hand. In stark contrast to contemporary accounts that paint an uncomplicated and homogeneous picture of the inhabitants of the Indies, Mandeville goes to great lengths to underline the diversity of eastern customs, cultures and beliefs.

This section of the *Book* also contains a substantial geographical digression with important implications for the *Book's* broader portrayal of the eastern world. Working from Odoric's claim that during his voyage through the Indian Ocean he observed the disappearance of the North Star from the night sky, Mandeville develops a complex argument for the sphericity of the Earth, the inhabitability of all its regions and the possibility of circumnavigation, supported by theoretical reasoning and 'eyewitness' observation.¹⁵ Particular emphasis is placed on the notion of the Earth's symmetry, with repeated references to the existence of the Antipodes and the subjectivity of geographical perspective ('just as it seems to us that they are under us, so it seems to them that we are under them').¹⁶ This further contributes to Mandeville's portrayal of earthly diversity, which unites all peoples in a *reductio ad unum*.¹⁷

Such discussion is well placed, since it precedes the *Book's* most thorough discussion of any eastern territory: that of the empire of the Great Khan, comprising both Cathay and Manzi (southern and northern China). Basing his description primarily on Odoric's *Relatio*, but also drawing heavily on Hayton of Armenia and Vincent of Beauvais, Mandeville deals here primarily with matters of Mongol history, culture and religious belief. There is a specific focus on the authority of the Great Khan, who is presented as the most powerful ruler the world has ever known, and the wealth and extent of his kingdom. In contrast to standard depictions of the barbarism and brutality of the Mongols, as in Odoric's account, Mandeville is at pains to emphasize their civility: in contrast to Latin Christians, they are 'obedient to their sovereign, and they do not fight with or scold one another', whilst the Khan is lauded for his just rule and religious tolerance.¹⁸ This sympathetic portrayal is further

¹⁵ Mandeville's argument incorporates material from Pliny's *Natural History*, Brunetto Latini's *Tresor* and John of Sacrobosco's *Sphera*. The Continental version of the text contains an extended conclusion.

¹⁶ *TBJM*, p. 114. This is a close echo of Pliny's *Natural History* 2.64.

¹⁷ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 132-9.

¹⁸ *TBJM*, p. 148.

developed by the emphasizing of positive Mongol attitudes towards Christianity, with Mandeville drawing attention to the high positions held by Christians at the Khan's court and stating that, whilst the Mongol ruler is not a believer, 'he very willingly hears God spoken about and certainly allows that there are Christians who go throughout his whole country'.¹⁹ The account of the Mongols is followed by a brief description of their tributary kingdoms, in which religious matters increasingly come to the fore. Following a description of the miraculous salvation of Christians from a wicked Persian emperor, the text turns to the devout Christians of Georgia, Abchaz and Armenia, who are again contrasted with the moral laxity of Latins. The medieval legend of Gog and Magog is also included here, with Mandeville claiming that the enclosed peoples who will be released with the coming of the Antichrist are not the Mongols, as was commonly believed by his contemporaries, but rather the lost tribes of Judah.²⁰ The identification of the Jews with the ultimate threat to Christendom serves to rehabilitate the Mongols, but it is also a reminder of Mandeville's deeply ingrained anti-Semitism.

Casting his gaze still further to the east, Mandeville turns to another figure of imperial power: Prester John, the mythical Christian emperor who entered the European imagination in the twelfth century when a Latin letter attributed to him circulated among the European courts. The *Book* is unique among contemporary accounts of the East in devoting considerable detail to the description of the prelate, who is implicitly presented as a Christian counterpart to the pagan Khan. The reader is offered an assortment of information regarding Prester John's wealth, the marvels of his kingdom and the faith of his people, as well as his military might and the functioning of his court. Mandeville draws out material from the *Letter* to present Prester John as a Christian king who, unlike those criticized in the prologue, conducts his military operations under the banner of the cross and leads a simple and ascetic personal life, marked by chastity and humility. This representation of the prelate as a model ruler is further underlined by its juxtaposition with the story of the Old Man of the Mountain, another commonplace in medieval accounts of the East, in which a rich

¹⁹ *TBJM*, p. 146.

²⁰ This tradition was less widespread, and Mandeville may have encountered it through the *Compendium theologiae veritatis* of Hugh Ripelin of Strasbourg (d. 1268). For the *Compendium* (which was historically attributed to Albertus Magnus), see Albertus Magnus, *Opera omnia*, ed. by Auguste and Emil Borgnet (Paris: Ludovicum Vivès, 1890-95), vol. 34, pp. 1-306.

Saracen constructs a fortified paradise and tricks young men into joining his army of private assassins through the promise of the earthly pleasures they will gain therein.²¹

The discussion of piety continues immediately in one of Mandeville's most inventive reinterpretations of Odoric, the account of the Vale Perilous. In the *Itinerarium*, Odoric describes his passage through a valley close to the Earthly Paradise containing a great number of corpses and the image of a horrifying human face set into the side of the mountain. His successful traverse of the valley and decision not to take any of the silver he finds there wins the praise of a group of Saracens, who marvel at his devoutness. Mandeville substantially reworks this into a much longer passage, transforming it into an allegorical exploration of piety in the face of spiritual trial.²² In the Continental text, the valley is completely dark and full of demons that physically assault Sir John and his companions, whilst the stone head belongs to a devil and marks a gateway to Hell. Many of the bodies belong to Christians who were led there by avarice; Sir John claims that it was only through acts of piety – specifically, prayer, making the sign of the cross and the taking of Communion – that he and his fellow travellers were saved. For Suzanne Yeager, the passage represents 'a microcosm of medieval Christian itinerant devotion' that mirrors Sir John's pilgrimage to Jerusalem.²³ It is particularly interesting, therefore, that the episode is followed by a series of positive portrayals of pagan, rather than Christian, piety. A description of the virtuous inhabitants of the islands of Bragmey, Oxidrate and Gynosophe, developed from the Alexander legend, prompts a reflection on the piety of Job and the possibility of salvation through the natural law for pagans who live in ignorance of Christ. Mandeville draws on the vision of Peter in Acts, interpreting this as 'a sign that one ought not to despise any earthly people for their diverse laws [...] for we do not know whom God loves and whom he hates'.²⁴ Following a brief description of the Earthly Paradise, which Sir John makes no claim to have seen himself, the conclusion of the *Book* returns to the question of pagan salvation:

²¹ This legend, which was widespread in the Middle Ages, is also reported by Polo. See *Le devisement dou monde*, ed. by Gabriella Ronchi (Milan: Mondadori, 1992), pp. 130-131.

²² Although the passage is twice as long in the Continental version as the Insular, neither can be conclusively linked with the author. See Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 206-7.

²³ Suzanne Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 133.

²⁴ *TBJM*, p. 175. See Acts 10:9-16.

Know that in all these countries about which I have spoken, and on all the islands, and amongst all these diverse peoples that I have described to you, and the diverse laws and the diverse beliefs they have, there is no people – because they have reason and understanding – who do not have some articles of our faith and some good points of our belief, and who do not believe in god who made the world, whom they call God of Nature.²⁵

The *Book* then concludes with a brief testament to the date of Sir John's travels, before asking readers to pray for his soul.

How, then, should we conceive of the *Book*? Although its vast scope and exceptionally varied influences make it difficult to define, there are key themes that run throughout the text. To the modern reader, these may seem to be a series of binary oppositions: devotion and *curiositas* are constantly juxtaposed, as are the call for Christian reform and the celebration of religious diversity, the inclusion of romance interludes alongside claims of eyewitness authority, and attempts at serious scholarly geography contending with reports of griffons and dragons. For Mandeville's contemporaries, however, this was all part of the encyclopaedic context in which the text was produced. Over the course of the next two centuries, developing interest would see readers approach the *Book* in a number of markedly different ways.

The Italian version of the *Book*

In the fifty years following its composition, the *Book* became an extraordinary success on a truly European scale. By the turn of the fifteenth century, it had been translated from French into Aragonese, English, Czech, Dutch, German, Italian and Latin; Catalan, Castilian, Danish and Irish versions were to follow.²⁶ Over three hundred manuscripts in these languages survive today: twice the number of extant witnesses of Polo's *Devisement du monde*, making it by far the most widely read travel text of the period. The advent of printing saw the *Book* continue in its popularity: following the first Dutch edition, issued in around 1477, it was printed in around sixty editions

²⁵ *TBJM*, pp. 183-4.

²⁶ For precise dates, see Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 22-3.

before 1600. The relationships between these different versions are various and complex, and the variations imparted by the influences of numerous translators, copyists and patrons result in what Ian Macleod Higgins has termed a multitext, ‘characterized by both its typically medieval intertextuality and its own distinctive *intratextual* multiplicity’.²⁷ Whilst the printed editions were generally more textually stable than their manuscript counterparts, they present the text in markedly different ways: from the marvellous woodcut illustrations of Anton Sorg’s German edition of 1481, to Spanish editions that emphasize the value of Sir John’s account in the context of contemporary exploration of the New World.

The *Book* first circulated in northern Italy in the late decades of the fourteenth century in the French Continental version: a major textual branch that survives in some twenty-eight witnesses and which were distributed from Paris to courts across Europe.²⁸ That courtly networks were essential to the dissemination of the *Book* is attested by the fact that the two surviving manuscripts of the text, MO and MiT, are connected to the Visconti family.²⁹ There is evidence, too, of a religious Latin readership in northern Italy at this time, with two surviving manuscripts of the Vulgate redaction produced in monasteries in Belluno and Verona in the early fifteenth century. Italy was also to prove an important ground for the translation and circulation of other versions of the text.³⁰ The Tyrolean magistrate Michel Velser, who produced the earliest German translation of the *Book* in the early 1390s, states in his prologue that he worked from a French copy of the text he found in a library in Lombardy.³¹ Over a century later, an abridged Hebrew translation of the *Book* – the only such example – was produced in Florence by the humanist Yohannan

²⁷ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 19.

²⁸ In 1380, for example, Juan I, future king of Aragon, wrote to his stepmother Marie de France asking for a number of French manuscripts, amongst them a ‘Mendivila’. See Alda Rossebastiano, *La tradizione ibero-romanza del ‘Libro de las maravillas del mundo’ di Juan de Mandavila* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1997), p. 8.

²⁹ Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, p. 69-76.

³⁰ In spite of the multilingual circulation of the *Book* in Italy, there is no evidence that this includes the Spanish version, which survives in a single manuscript. See Rossebastiano, *La tradizione ibero-romanza*.

³¹ Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, p. 184. At least one manuscript of Velser’s translation circulated amongst German speakers in Italy. Now held in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, it belonged in the early fifteenth century to a Master Zyriacus of the convent of S. Maria de Caritate in the Diocese of Tranato, before passing into the possession of Jorgen Rol, a schoolmaster in Venice. See Eric Morall, introduction to *Sir John Mandevilles Reisebeschreibung* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974), p. lviii-lix.

Alemanno.³² In terms of the *Book*'s dissemination within Italy, the most important translation was that made from the French Continental text into Italian by an unknown individual around the turn of the fourteenth century. Despite increasing scholarly awareness of the *Book*'s multiple forms, the Italian version has until recently received relatively little critical attention.³³ The text survives in twelve manuscripts, nine of which were produced before 1500. This may be a relatively modest figure compared to the number of surviving Italian copies of the accounts of Polo (20) and Odoric (12) from the same period, but it nevertheless implies that the *Book* achieved a significant Italian readership.³⁴ As we shall see, however, it was the advent of print that was to most drastically affect Mandeville's fortune in Italy.

The earliest instance of scholarly engagement with the Italian version of the *Book* is the critical edition published in 1870 by Francesco Zambrini, based on two Tuscan manuscript sources and a number of printed editions.³⁵ Whilst unsatisfactory in terms both of its scope and the resulting text, Zambrini's edition has paved the way for more recent research into the Italian Mandeville tradition. In her brief 1992 survey of the manuscript corpus, Alda Rossebastiano concludes that the Italian text stemmed from the French Continental version of the *Book*.³⁶ This theory has since been confirmed in a more recent publication, which convincingly demonstrates that the likely source was Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 3219, a manuscript of the Q branch of the French Continental text in Picard French; Rossebastiano draws attention to the presence of the manuscript in Italy in the late fourteenth century and the presence of telling philological evidence (including the appearance of the Picard /ka/) in the Italian text.³⁷ The precise date of the *Book*'s translation into Italian remains unknown.

³² See Fabrizio Lelli, 'La version hébraïque abrégée des Voyages de Jean de Mandeville, réalisée par Yohanan Alemanno' in C. Le Blanc e L. Simonutti eds., *Le masque de l'écriture* (Geneva: Droz, 2015), pp. 169-86.

³³ This is perhaps due in part to interest among Italian scholars in the numerous (and genuine) Italian travellers to the East in this period, and the tendency of scholars of Mandeville to focus on the major English, French and German redactions.

³⁴ These figures are taken from O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 312-14 and 316-17.

³⁵ Francesco Zambrini, *I viaggi di Giovanni da Mandavilla*, 2 vols. (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1870).

³⁶ Alda Rossebastiano, *La tradizione manoscritta della versione italiana del 'Voyage d'outremer' di Jean de Mandeville* (Turin: U.T.E.T., 1992), pp. 54-57.

³⁷ Alda Rossebastiano, 'À propos de la source de la version italienne des Voyages de Jean de Mandeville' in Ernst Bremer ed., *Jean de Mandeville in Europa: neue Perspektiven in der Reiseliteraturforschung* (Paderborn and Munich: Fink, 2007), pp. 31-40. See also Giulia Pellecchia, 'La tradizione italiana dei "Viaggi di Mandeville"' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi di Ferrara, 2005); 'Il volgarizzamento italiano del *Voyage* di John Mandeville e i suoi rapporti con la redazione francese' in *Medioevo romanzo* 31, 2 (2007), 345-80. Both Rossebastiano and Pellecchia have worked towards the establishment of a stemma codicum, reaching slightly different conclusions;

The earliest French manuscript known to have circulated in Italy, MO, was produced in France in 1388, whilst the oldest Italian manuscript, FL, dates from around the turn of the fifteenth century. Since FL belongs to a group of manuscripts (γ) in which the text is relatively corrupted, it might be assumed that it postdates the original translation. A conservative estimate would therefore place the translation in the final decades of the fourteenth century. Given the context in which the French text first circulated in Italy, it is possible that the translation was produced in a courtly context.

The Italian translation of the *Book* is in many ways a faithful rendering of the French Continental text, which largely maintains existing syntactical structures and narrative progression.³⁸ Nevertheless, it also contains a noticeably high number of errors. Many of these are undoubtedly a result of the translation process in a manuscript context, whilst others point towards miscomprehension, suggesting the translator lacked complete mastery of French: the translation is often effected on a word for word basis, resulting in a text that is often clunky and sometimes nonsensical, with the original meaning occasionally altogether irretrievable.³⁹ Motivated perhaps by these difficulties, the translator appears to have been particularly concerned with the issue of comprehensibility. The Italian text is characterized by the presence of explicative glosses and amplifications geared towards facilitating reading, often introduced with *zoe* or *over*; at other points, the syntax of individual sentences and passages is altered in an apparent attempt to aid the reader.⁴⁰ Textual accessibility is in many ways a hallmark of the *Book* as a whole, as marked by Sir John's claim in the prologue to have composed his account in the vernacular to ensure a wide readership, and the Italian version offers particularly clear evidence that later readers shared this concern.⁴¹

the former's argument, the more convincing, identifies three groups: Group α is the closest to the original, whilst groups β and γ are substantially corrupted.

³⁸ On translation from French to Italian in this period, see Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 70-100.

³⁹ For example, in the description of pygmies ('qui ne sont mies plus haus que jusques au braudel dun homme') *braudel* (belt) is translated as *le spalle*.

⁴⁰ See, for example, the description of the four rivers flowing from the Earthly Paradise. Malcolm Letts ed., *Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953) vol. 2, pp. 405-6: 'La premiere riuere, qui a nom Phison, cest a dire en leur langaige assemblee, car trop dautres riuieres si assemblent et se geccent en ceste riuere'. MaC, fol. 68v: 'El primo fonte se chiama Fison, che sona in nostra lingua adunanza overo congregatione, perche molti altri fiumi se reduseno et gettano in questo fiume'.

⁴¹ *TBJM*, p. 5-6: 'Know that I should have put this writing into Latin so as to explain things more briefly, but because more [people] understand French better than Latin, I have put it into French so that everyone can understand it, and the knights and the lords and the other noble men who know no Latin,

The Italian version of the *Book* circulated widely throughout northern and central Italy, although there is little evidence to suggest that manuscripts of the *Book* penetrated any further south in the Italian peninsula.⁴² Only three surviving manuscripts were produced before 1450, yet the fact that the earliest of these (FL) is both Tuscan and a member of the most corrupted branch of the textual tree suggests the Italian text disseminated rapidly from the northern courts. That the low number of extant Italian manuscripts from this period is comparable to the figures for Italian-produced copies of the French Continental and Vulgate Latin redactions (two and three respectively) does not necessarily imply all three versions shared a modest readership: given the recurrence of low-grade, owner-produced copies, it is entirely plausible that the Italian version has suffered a significantly greater attrition rate than its counterparts, which were regularly housed in courtly or ecclesiastical libraries.

The second half of the fifteenth century saw an immediate increase in manuscript production of the Italian version of the *Book*. Conversely, there are no surviving Italian-produced copies of the French or Latin versions produced after 1450. It is particularly noteworthy that four of the extant Italian manuscripts – a third of the entire corpus – can be accurately dated to the late 1460s. That three of these were produced in the nearby towns of Adria, Ferrara and Padua (and the fourth in Parma) suggests a particular concentration of production in the northeast of the peninsula, an area in which the literary culture associated with the Jerusalem pilgrimage flourished.⁴³ Further evidence of the *Book*'s circulation in this geographical context is offered by the existence of a number of shared characteristics between these manuscripts, including the presence of interpolations from the *Itinerario* of the Paduan pilgrim Gabriele Capodilista. Although the Italian version of the *Book* was printed throughout northern Italy from 1480 onwards, production of vernacular manuscripts continued well into the sixteenth century. These copies were

or a little, and who have not been beyond the sea know and understand whether I speak the truth or not'. The Italian text translates 'romanz' as 'volgare'.

⁴² The only manuscript with any discernable connection to a location south of Tuscany is Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale MS XII D 57 (NN), produced in 1467 by the notary Stefano Fozio for Leonardo de Legistis of Aquila, *locum tenens* of the duke of Adria, Matteo di Capua. Although the manuscript itself offers no indication of the location of its composition, it belongs to Group β, a group geographically localized within northeastern Italy. It also contains an unusual combination of both northern and southern linguistic traits, consistent with a manuscript copied from a northern exemplar by a southern scribe. It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that the manuscript was produced in or near to Adria at the time of Leonardo's stay there; it may subsequently have returned to southern Italy before entering the holdings of the Biblioteca Nazionale in the nineteenth century.

⁴³ NN, NYP, LBL and PP respectively.

often produced by their owners and copied from printed books. Extracts from the *Book* also appear in four manuscript compendia produced in northern and central Italy around the turn of the sixteenth century; in at least three of these, close reading suggests the use of a printed, rather than manuscript, exemplar.⁴⁴

The Italian version in print

The publication of the first Italian edition of the *Book* in Milan in 1480 was to mark a watershed in its dissemination. The text was printed a further twenty-two times in the course of the next century in the cities of Milan (a total of 6 editions), Bologna (4), Florence (2) and Venice (11).⁴⁵ Whilst this figure is itself remarkable, the level of interest in the *Book* in the decades either side of the turn of the sixteenth century is perhaps even more so. The sixteen editions printed between 1488 and 1505 place the *Book* alongside the most popular vernacular texts of the time, outnumbering bestsellers such as the vernacular *Leggenda aurea* (6 Italian editions in the same period), Domenico Cavalca's *Specchio della Croce* (8 editions), and Dante's *Commedia* (5 vernacular editions); it even began to rival the *Fior di virtù* (28 editions), which was in constant demand as a core text in vernacular schools.⁴⁶ The singularity of Mandeville's appeal is made all the more evident by comparison with other medieval accounts of the East. Marco Polo's *Milione* was only printed five times in Italy prior to its inclusion in Giovanni Battista Ramusio's influential *Navigazioni e viaggi* (1555), whilst Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerarium* was limited to a single Latin edition printed at Pesaro in 1513. The *Book* was also the most widely circulated vernacular account of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, though it would later be surpassed by the *Viaggio da Venetia al Santo Sepulchro* (printed in sixteen editions between 1518 and 1600). As this thesis will explore, the *Book*'s appeal to a wide range of Italian readers with diverse interests was of central importance to its success in this period.

⁴⁴ See Appendix.

⁴⁵ In some instances, rushes on stock forced a printer to quickly reprint, as happened in Bologna in 1488 and Milan in 1496-7.

⁴⁶ Paul Grendler, 'What Zuanne Read in School: Vernacular Texts in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Schools', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16, 1 (1982), 44-7.

The coming of print also did much to broaden the *Book*'s geographical distribution. Bookshop inventories show that it was sold in Parma and Ferrara: both cities where it had circulated in manuscript form.⁴⁷ Marks of ownership in other printed copies tie the *Book* to locations across northern Italy and Tuscany, with readers from towns such as Brescia, Genoa, Ravenna and Arezzo; as with the manuscripts, there is only limited evidence for their circulation in the south of the peninsula.⁴⁸ Print also made the text accessible to a broader range of readers. Marks of ownership and documentary evidence reveal that the *Book* was owned by prominent figures such as Ercole I d'Este and the Florentine sculptor Baccio Bandinelli, as well as parish priests, shopkeepers and other ordinary Italians.⁴⁹ It was also shared among acquaintances: a reader from Pratovecchio inscribed a copy as belonging to himself 'et amicorum', whilst Menocchio claimed to have borrowed a copy from his parish priest.⁵⁰ As Rosa Salzberg and others have observed, cheaply printed texts also circulated in contexts connected to performance and oral storytelling, becoming part of a public culture shared by individuals with varying degrees of literacy.⁵¹ The *Book* does not belong to an intrinsically performative genre, and it cannot be stated with any certainty whether it was recited by public entertainers; yet it was certainly read aloud in private contexts, and just as copies were shared amongst readers, so its claims and content must have been discussed in public.

The increased diversity of the *Book*'s readership is reflected in the physical form of the Italian editions, which bear the hallmarks of a cheaply produced text intended to appeal to a broad audience. Printed for the most part on low-quality paper in either quarto or octavo format, the majority employ either a Gothic or an early Roman typeface. Several editions also include generic woodcut images on the title page that would have given prospective readers a sense of the text's content. Defining

⁴⁷ See the following inventories. For Martinati-Quintrello 1497: Alberto Del Prato, 'Librai e biblioteche parmensi del secolo XV', *Archivio storico per le provincie parmensi* 4 (1904), 24-35 for Sivieri c.1503: Angela Nuovo, *Il commercio librario a Ferrara tra XV e XVI secolo: La bottega di Domenico Sivieri* (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 180-273; for Gorgonzola 1537: Arnaldo Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola: Editore e libraio in Milano (1496-1536)* (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 126-45.

⁴⁸ Rome, BAV Stamp. Ross. 325 (Venice: Nicolò Ferrari, 1491) contains marks showing it was owned by at least three separate individuals from Ravenna.

⁴⁹ Bandinelli's copy is Rome, BAV R. G. Geogr. V. 135 (Venice: Alvise Torti, 1537).

⁵⁰ The Pratovecchio copy is Florence, BNCF Palatino 22 4.I.4.

⁵¹ Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 64. On this subject, see also Luca Degl'Innocenti, Brian Richardson and Chiara Sbordoni eds., *Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016) and *Italian Studies* 71, 2 (2016).

precisely what constitutes ‘popular’ print in this period is not without its problems: Salzberg has observed that many of the physical characteristics traditionally seen as representative of popular texts in fact appear across a wide range of genres.⁵² Furthermore, it is important to underline that even in the age of movable type no two printed editions of a text were identical; as this thesis will explore, the various editions of Mandeville were produced in different contexts and intended to appeal to distinct groups of readers. Nevertheless, the range of accompanying paratextual features found in the Italian editions reflects material and quantitative indicators for the *Book*’s wide appeal, a notion further supported by the limited evidence concerning its sale. Instances of quick reissues by the same printer in the late 1480s and 1490s – such as the two editions produced in Bologna in 1488 by Ugo Ruggerio, or the three by Ulrich Schinzenzeler in Milan in 1496 and 1497 – imply that it flew off the shelves. Although little information is available concerning the size of these print runs, the Milanese bookseller Niccolò Gorgonzola, who commissioned an edition of the *Book* in 1517, regularly ordered issues in excess of 1000 copies.⁵³ An inventory of his warehouse taken in 1537 reveals that at that time he owned 419 copies of the *Book*, suggesting that he had sold around 600 copies over the course of twenty years (and this after the peak of the text’s popularity).⁵⁴ The sole indication of the *Book*’s sale price appears in a copy of the octavo edition printed in Venice in 1553, in which a handwritten note states that a Florentine, Zanobi Rossi, purchased it in 1566 for fifteen soldi.⁵⁵ This price places it firmly towards the lower-middle end of the market, costing little more than the ‘cose minute’ that under a Venetian law of 1537 were spared from paper quality control.⁵⁶ It would have been an affordable luxury for a manual labourer, and may have been sold not only in dedicated bookshops but also on street stalls and by itinerant salesmen.⁵⁷

⁵² Salzberg, *Ephemeral City*, p. 21.

⁵³ Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 126.

⁵⁴ Arnold Ganda, *Niccolò Gorgonzola: editore e libraio in Milano (1496-1536)*, p. 131. Bookshop inventories were often only compiled when stock was passed on through sale or inheritance. Vernacular books were often referred to in vague terms. It is noteworthy that on the four occasions where the *Book* is listed, it appears under variations of Mandeville’s name.

⁵⁵ UCLA Library G370.M31L 1554.

⁵⁶ The law applied to books costing ten soldi or less; see Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writing and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 142.

⁵⁷ In 1534, a workman in the Arsenale would expect to earn between 20 and 24 soldi a day. See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: the Perspective of the World* trans. Siân Reynolds (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1992), p. 302.

Scholarly insights into the Italian print corpus are relatively sparse. Josephine Waters Bennett's innovative study of the Mandeville tradition offers an incomplete list of the Italian editions, whilst Anna Laura Lepschy has provided a *stemma codicum* for the incunables on the basis of a close reading of specific passages.⁵⁸ The only attempt to examine the relationship between manuscript and print corpora is made by Pellecchia, who identifies the source of the print tradition as FN on the basis of a shared title, identical division of the text into chapters and common lacunae.⁵⁹ Her brief analysis overlooks the fact that FN shares the title and colophon of the Tuscan editions, which differ considerably from other editions, implying that the exemplar was in fact a printed book.⁶⁰ An examination of the *editio princeps* reveals clear orthographic conformity with patterns prevalent in manuscript group β. Within this group, the edition corresponds most closely to Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS H 188 inf. (MiA), produced in 1478 in the town of Appiano Gentile about twenty-five miles north of Milan – just two years before the publication of the first edition in that city. Although differences between the two texts rule out the possibility that MiA itself was the exemplar, their chronological and geographical proximity suggest the use of a closely related manuscript.

Pietro da Corneno, the first Italian printer of the *Book*, was not particularly successful in his chosen profession. His recorded output is limited to the early 1480s and numbers only a handful of popular texts, mainly of a religious nature. Precisely why Pietro decided to produce the *Book* is unclear, although it should be noted that the Milanese book trade had strong ties with Lyon, where Mandeville had been printed in February and April of the same year. Pietro introduced a number of paratextual features that would distinguish the Italian text from its counterparts across Europe. Eschewing the folio format of his Dutch and French predecessors in favour of the cheaper quarto, he divided the text into 182 separate chapters, setting a pattern

⁵⁸ Josephine Waters Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1954), p. 376-83; Anna Laura Lepschy, "Quel libro de Mandavila... che me aveva tuto travaliato". A Presentation of the Italian Incunables' in Anna Laura Lepschy, John Took and Dennis E. Rhodes eds., *Book Production and Letters in the Western European Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Conor Fahy* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1986), pp. 209-19.

⁵⁹ Pellecchia, 'La tradizione italiana', p. 37-41.

⁶⁰ As Pellecchia notes in her 2007 article, a reference to Pope Julius II on fol. 163^v suggests this manuscript was produced after 1503.

that would be followed by other Italian printers.⁶¹ His most telling contribution was perhaps the christening of the text as a *Tractato de le più meravigliose cosse e più notabile che se trovano in le parte del mondo*: a title derived in part from the textual exordium and with no precedent in the manuscript corpus.⁶² Whilst other European editions continued to refer to the *Book* as a description of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, Pietro's departure from this denotes an emphasizing of the text's portrayal of the geography, inhabitants and mirabilia of the eastern world.⁶³ This is reflected in the chapter headings, where even in the description of the Holy Land there is a discernible focus on lore and biblical history; the regular highlighting of 'cose maravigliose' contrasts with generic references to 'luoghi santi', which are often unidentified. As Chapter 3 will explore in greater detail, this departure from the presentation of the *Book* as a pilgrimage text indicates Pietro's awareness of its potential to appeal to a broad audience at a time when European exploration was provoking considerable popular interest in the East.

Another early actor to exert an important influence on the Italian Mandeville tradition was Ugo Ruggeri, one of the foremost printers in 1480s Bologna. The two editions he published within the space of six months in 1488 suggest that the *Book* met with considerable commercial success, and their position within the stemma codicum also indicates they were read in Florence and Venice, influencing later editions of the text produced in these cities.⁶⁴ Ruggeri did much to improve the Italian text. In addition to correcting many of the errors present in the *princeps* and clarifying some confusing references, he provided vernacular translations for a number of non-

⁶¹ Pietro's chapter divisions may have derived from his manuscript exemplar. It is noteworthy that MiA is the only extant manuscript to do this, its scribe including a 'tabula regionarii de mirabilibus mundi' that breaks the text down under 195 headings.

⁶² The full title is: 'Tractato de le più meravigliose cosse e più notabile che se trovano in le parte del mondo, redute e collette sono brevità in el presente compendio dal strenuissimo cavelere sperondoro Johanne de Mandavilla anglico, nato ne la Cita de santo albano, el quale secondo dio presencialmente ha visitato quasi tute le parte habital de el mondo. Cossi fidelmente ha notato tute quelle più degne cose che l'a trovato e veduto in esse parte, e chi bene discorre questo libro avera perfecta cognitione de tuti li reami, provincie, nazione e populi, gente, costumi, lege, hystorie, e degne antiquitate con brevità, de le quale parte da altri non sono traciare e parte più confusamente d'alchun gran valente homini son state tocate e a magior fede. El prefato auctore in persona e stato nel 1322 in Yerusalem, in Asia mentre chiamata Turchia, in Armenia grande e in la piccolo, in Sychia zoe in Tartaria, in Persia, in Syria o vero Seria, in Arabia, in Egipto alto e in lo inferiore, in Libia, in la parte grande de Ethiopia, in Caldea, in Amazonia, in India mazore, in la meza e in la minore, in diverse sette de latini, greci, iudei, e barbari, christiani, e infideli, e in molte altre provincie, como appare nel tractato de sotto'.

⁶³ Titles include *Reysen int hellighe lant* (Netherlands: s.n., 1477), *De la terre de promission et les diverses et estranges choses* (Lyon: s.n., 1480) and *Reysen und wanderschaffien durch das Gelobte Land* (Augsburg: Anton Sorg, 1480).

⁶⁴ See Appendix.

scriptural instances of Latin, including the Greek response to the Pope's letter and the report of inscriptions found at Calvary.⁶⁵ The level of difference between the two editions is such that Lepschy has questioned whether Ruggeri used a different manuscript as an exemplar, although the recurrence of a number of crucial features, most notably the unique title and shortened ending, suggest that he corrected the first edition with a manuscript.⁶⁶ Other features introduced by Ruggeri, including the numbering of chapter headings and printing on lower quality paper, were widely copied in later editions.

Although the text of the Italian version was now essentially fixed, printers continued to change the form it took on the page in accordance with the exigencies of specific markets. One example of this is the edition printed by Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri in Florence in June 1492, the title page of which bears a woodcut frontispiece showing a king and his mounted retinue being greeted by a sage, who proffers a book. This generic representation of the value of reading (in fact borrowed from an edition of the *Fiore di virtù* printed the year before) is accompanied by a unique title that describes the text as 'ridotto in lingua thoscana' and Sir John as French, rather than English. Since the usual title introduced in the editio princeps appears on the recto of the same folio, it appears likely that this proclamation was motivated more by a desire to associate the *Book* with the established international literary vernacular than an awareness of the original language in which it was written. Another notable title page is that of the Milanese edition produced in 1502 for Giovanni da Legnano, which abandons the descriptive title in favour of the simple 'Questo sie el libro de Johanne de Mandavilla' – an indication, perhaps, of the extent of the *Book*'s fame in Milan following its successes in the previous decade. It also includes a remarkable frontispiece, with two armies either side of a river in the foreground, and an ocean replete with ships in the background. As Chapter 3 will explore, the appearance of such imagery in this and other editions indicates that Italian printers deliberately marketed Mandeville alongside New World material in the opening years of the sixteenth century.

⁶⁵ Some of Ruggeri's interventions were aimed specifically at his Bolognese audience: for example, the description of diamonds 'grandi come uno pizolo' (M1, b1^v) is changed to 'grandi come uno quatrino bolognese' (B1, f1^v).

⁶⁶ Lepschy, 'Quel libro', p. 213.

Production of the *Book* tailed off from its frenetic peak around the turn of the century, yet Italian printers continued to issue the *Book* regularly in the 1520s and 30s. In line with a general trend in the Italian print industry, after 1517 the *Book* was printed exclusively in Venice. Melchiorre Sessa the Elder, one of the city's most prominent printers, printed it twice in 1515 and 1521, and it was published again by Luigi Torti in 1534 and 1537. Both printers used the pocket-sized octavo format popularized by Aldo Manuzio and others, using italic typeface to make the most of limited space. The 1504 edition issued by Giovan Battista Sessa (father of Melchiorre) may even have been the first non-religious text to be printed in Italy in the even smaller sextodecimo format; he was also the first printer to introduce a table of chapters, a feature copied in all later Venetian editions.⁶⁷ The final two editions of the *Book*, published in 1554 by the minor printer Niccolò Bascarini and in 1567 by Andrea Mushcio for the bookseller Battista Mammello, made little innovation in their presentation of the text other than an increased tendency towards Tuscan orthography in the latter, which was 'novamente stampato et ricoretto'. High survival rates for this edition imply a degree of success, but by the middle of the sixteenth century Mandeville was becoming increasingly outdated. The relative success of the Italian editions of Marco Polo's account – published twice in the 1550s and 1590s and, unlike the *Book*, included in Giovanni Battista Ramusio's influential *Navigazioni e viaggi* (1555) – signals the degree to which readers of medieval accounts of Asia increasingly appraised their content on the basis of more recent reports. Mandeville's willingness to pander to medieval expectations of the East, which had ensured the *Book*'s popularity for a period of two centuries, became a key factor in its fall from prominence.

Features of the Italian text

Having explored the dissemination of the Italian version of the *Book*, we are in a position to ask precisely how it can be characterized within the broader pattern of the text in Europe. Whilst it is helpful to bear in mind Higgins' helpful image of the different versions of the *Book* as 'isotopes', each differing in content and weighting, it must also be noted that to speak of any 'version' of Mandeville is to accept a degree

⁶⁷ Based on the Universal Short Title Catalogue, accessible at <http://www.ustc.ac.uk> (accessed 9/8/16).

of internal variation and evolution. As we have seen, the Italian version is a fairly literal translation of the French Continental text, with a clearly discernible emphasis on enhancing textual comprehensibility. Surviving manuscripts share a number of linguistic traits typical of northern Italian dialects, which testify to the text's translation and circulation in that context; notably, many of these are retained in Tuscan-produced copies. Particularly discernible is the regularity of monophthong vowels (e.g. *tene*, *nova*, *bono*, *loco*), which are sometimes corrected to diphthongs in Tuscan manuscripts. Also prevalent is the shortening of intervocalic double consonants to a single consonant (e.g. *tera*, *letore*, *dita*, *sarebe*), and the use of 'z' for the affricate consonant dʒ (e.g. *imazene*, *Zudei*). Earlier manuscripts often contain terms of specifically northern origin (e.g. *fiamada*, *veggio*, *zobia*, *fumara*), although those produced from the late fifteenth century onwards tend to replace these with more standardized equivalents. Unsurprisingly given their area of production, the printed editions are predominantly in a similar northern *koiné*.⁶⁸ As with the manuscripts, it is the Florentine editions that differ the most from this pattern, with Lepschy observing several unique individual readings.⁶⁹ As the Florentine title indicates, this is the result of a deliberate and systematic editorial process atypical of Morgiani and Petri's wider output. Close comparison of their edition shows that it is almost identical to the later F2, produced by an unknown printer for the influential editor Piero Pacini da Pescia. Given that Morgiani and Petri produced at least thirteen works for Pacini in the 1490s, it seems entirely plausible that F1 was the result of similar collaboration.⁷⁰ This foreshadowing of linguistic reform is completed in the final Venetian edition of 1567, 'novamente stampato, & ricoretto', which corrects many spellings to conform to Tuscan orthographic norms.

In addition to this process of gradual linguistic refinement, the transition to print brought about other changes to the Italian text. Mandeville's exotic alphabets, impossible to reproduce with standard movable type, are absent from all of the Italian editions (although interestingly the text itself continues to refer to their presence). Similarly, none of the editions contains the authorial epilogue in which Sir John reiterates the date and scope of his pilgrimage and beseeches readers to pray for his

⁶⁸ Lepschy, "Quel libro", p. 218. Zambrini, in a manner typical of his time, describes these as 'sconciamente guaste e corrotte e piuttosto in dialetto che in illustre volgare italico' (Zambrini ed., *I viaggi*, vol. I, p. xxii).

⁶⁹ Lepschy, "Quel libro", p. 214.

⁷⁰ It is more difficult to assign the undated F2 to a specific printer.

soul. Instead, the text finishes with the preceding paragraph, shifting the emphasis from Sir John's piety to the possibility of further terrestrial exploration:

Per che se io descrivisse tuto ciò che n'è nelle parte dellà, chiunque poi se penasse e travagliasse la persona per andare nelle parte delà cercando li lontani paesi voliendo recontare overo scrivere dele cose stragnie se trovarèbe impatiato per la mia descrizione; però che io non poterebe nè dire nè contare cossa novella de la quale li auditori se potesseno delectare. E ancora dicesse che le cosse novella piaceno sì che per tanto io ho fato fine, senza più recontare de le cosse stranie e diverse che sono nele parte dellà. E ciò che io ho descrito de alcuno paese è tanto che dei bastare. Lasso ad altrui che voglia andare dilà, però che loro molte cosse ancora tornarano a descrivere.⁷¹

It is possible that the original epilogue was absent from the manuscript exemplar used by Pietro da Corneno for his *editio princeps*, yet its presence throughout the Italian manuscript corpus (with the exception of the badly damaged KK) suggests that its excision was a deliberate editorial intervention. Certainly, this would conform to the broader trend introduced by Pietro and developed by his successors of presenting the *Book* as a catalogue of eastern marvels and downplaying the importance of the Jerusalem pilgrimage.

Whilst it is often easy to fall into the trap of considering manuscript and print in binary terms, the Italian Mandeville tradition serves as a reminder that the two forms not only coexisted but were mutually influential. Italian readers continued to copy the *Book* by hand well into the sixteenth century, using both manuscripts and printed copies as exemplars; it is notable that the three manuscript compendia containing extracts from the *Book* were compiled from printed copies.⁷² In addition to the broader influence of manuscript culture on typography and mise-en-page, readers bound printed copies of the *Book* alongside other texts in a manner reminiscent of zibaldone manuscripts, scribbled catchwords at the end of gatherings, and added their own marginal glosses. As this thesis will discuss, instances such as these offer valuable insights into the approaches of individual readers to the text: from pilgrims

⁷¹ Fol. O8^v.

⁷² See Appendix.

who highlighted the holy sites of Jerusalem to merchants who marked references to the valuable trading commodities of the Indies.

What, then, is the place of the Italian version within the Mandeville tradition? Within Italy itself, it was far more dominant and long-lived than the Vulgate and French Continental redactions. The number of surviving manuscripts is relatively modest compared to those in English, French, Dutch and German, yet Italian copies remain a significant constituent of the *Book*'s broader corpus. The twenty-four editions produced in Italy after 1480 make the Italian version the most printed of all the *Book*'s redactions, and point to an unparalleled level of Italian interest in the text in the years either side of the turn of the sixteenth century.⁷³ However, as the remainder of this thesis will explore, it is the evidence for the Italian version's rich and varied reception that most convincingly demonstrates its important role within the *Book*'s European tradition.

⁷³ Nineteen editions were printed in France, thirteen in the Holy Roman Empire, six in England and five each in Bohemia, Spain and the Low Countries.

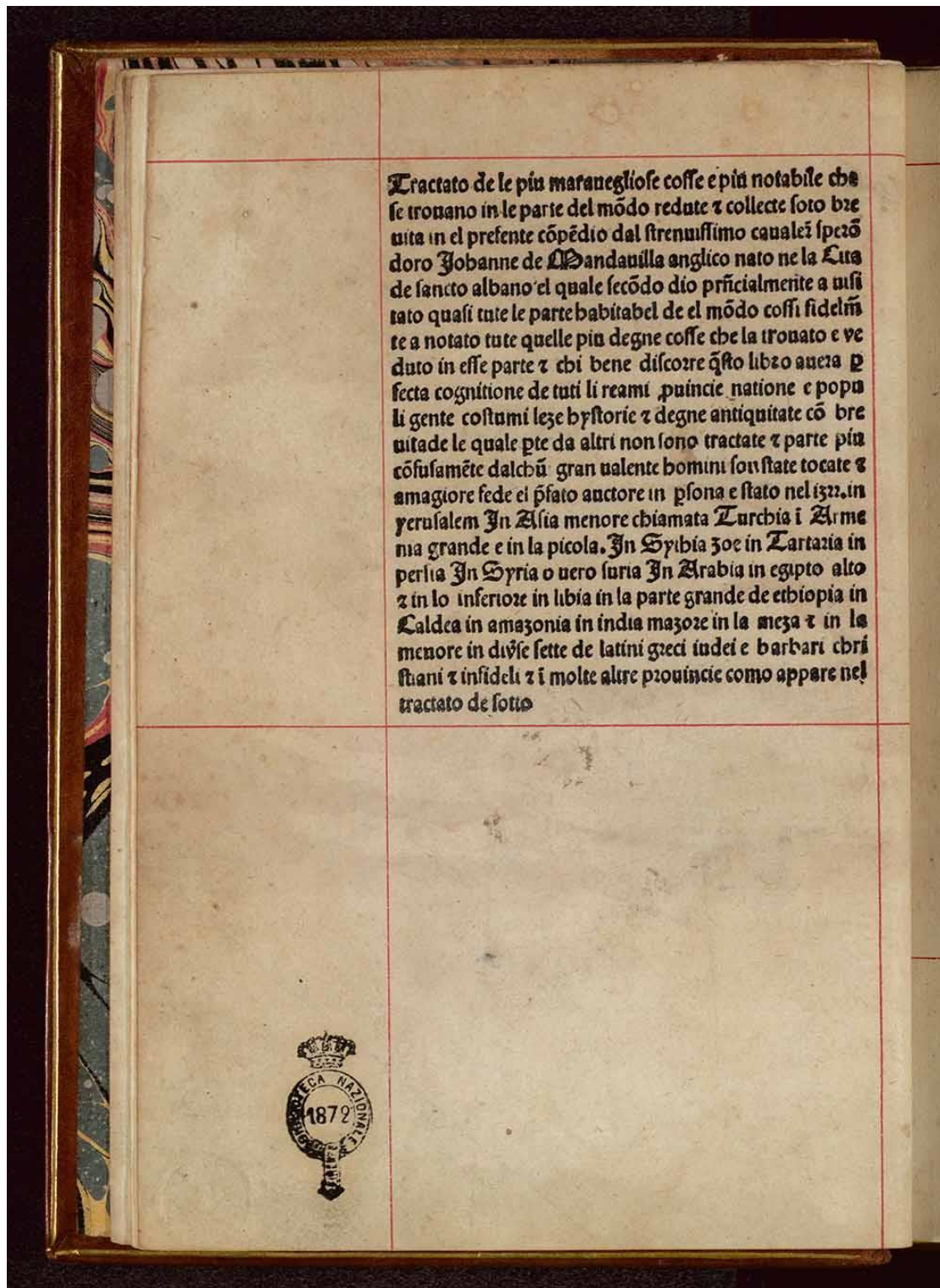


Figure 1: Title page (a1v) of the *editio princeps*. *Tractato de le più merauigliose cosse e più notabile che se trouano in le parte del mondo* (Milan: Pietro da Corneno, 31 July 1480).

Chapter 2: Pilgrimage and Devotion

The *Book of John Mandeville* is characterized by diversity, both in terms of its numerous textual forms and the varying ways in which it was read. Nevertheless, for many readers – especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – it was first and foremost a text concerned with pilgrimage. This chapter will explore the connections between the *Book* and Italian pilgrimage culture, with a specific focus on the ways in which it influenced the textual culture associated with devotional practice. Following a brief introduction to the representation of pilgrimage in the *Book*, it will examine the text's manuscript and print circulation among readers interested primarily in its devotional value. Two specific case studies will then demonstrate the intersections between the Italian version of the *Book* and the production of pilgrimage accounts intended for use in the practice of virtual pilgrimage.

The *Book* as a pilgrimage account

From its very opening, the *Book* is marked out as a text concerned with pilgrimage. Following the exordium's opening lamentation of the loss of the Holy Land, the narratorial voice of Sir John is identified through the statement that he wrote his account 'because it has been a long time since there was a general passage over the sea and many people delight in hearing the said Holy Land spoken about'.¹ The specification of the year in which the pilgrimage was undertaken and promise of a detailed description of Jerusalem and the holy sites further serve to situate the *Book* within the established literary tradition of the pilgrimage account.² However, this traditional focus is complicated by the simultaneous introduction of the theme of earthly diversity, with Sir John promising to describe the lands beyond the Levant and their 'different peoples with diverse laws and diverse customs'.³

¹ Higgins ed., *TBJM*, p. 5.

² It is notable that Sir John states that his account could have been composed in Latin, but that he 'put it into French so that everyone can understand it' (Higgins ed., *TBJM*, p. 6). Higgins interprets this as both an authenticating strategy and part of the broader late-medieval pattern of vernacularizing Latin learning. This might also be read in light of the trend, increasingly prevalent in the fourteenth century, for both lay and clerical pilgrims to produce vernacular accounts of their journeys.

³ Higgins ed., *TBJM*, p. 5.

The *Book* was by no means the first or only ‘pilgrimage’ account to dwell extensively on non-devotional matters. Petrarch’s *Itinerarium*, a pseudo-pilgrimage guide composed in 1358 for his friend Giovanni Mandelli, details the geography and history of the Mediterranean whilst simultaneously reflecting on the poet’s own literary career.⁴ Other fourteenth-century pilgrimage accounts, such as those of the Tuscans Leonardo Frescobaldi, Simone Sigoli and Giorgio Gucci who travelled to Jerusalem in 1384, exhibit a developed interest in the religion and customs of eastern peoples. As Joan Pau Rubiés and Jaś Elsner observe, in this period pilgrimage literature ‘became increasingly a vehicle for empirical research’.⁵ This is perhaps more so with Mandeville than with any of his contemporaries. The *Book*’s account of the Holy Land contains a wealth of scriptural, historical and legendary material in addition to observations on the customs and laws of its inhabitants; elsewhere, descriptions of Constantinople and Egypt are included as part of the pilgrimage route but provide the frame for discussions of religious and cultural differences. The disorderly manner of the narrative, in which it is often difficult to discern any sense of itinerary, further enhances the impression of the *Book* as an encyclopaedic collection of lore, anecdote and history projected onto the pilgrimage account model. In an interesting counterpoint to this, the description of marvellous lands further to the East in the second half of the *Book* regularly includes material pertaining to pilgrimage and devotion, from reports of the Hajj and pagan religious practice to the allegorical account of the Vale Perilous.⁶

Modern scholars have interpreted Mandeville’s amalgamation of the devotional and the marvellous in a number of ways. Donald Howard has read the juxtaposition as a representative of the experience of pilgrimage, in which travellers ‘learn off bits of information and glimpse curiosities as [they] pass’, while Christian Zacher sees the *Book* as the culmination of a broader late medieval trend of

⁴ See Theodore J. Cachey Jr., ‘The Place of the *Itinerarium*’, in Victoria Kirkham and Armando Maggi eds., *Petrarch: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 229-241.

⁵ Jaś Elsner and Joan Pau Rubiés, ‘Introduction’, *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 39.

⁶ The passage is considerably extended in the Continental text, with greater emphasis placed on the travellers’ devotional acts (the taking of communion and saying of ‘prayers and devotions’) and spiritual experiences (the experience of ‘spiritual wonders’ whilst unconscious). It is unclear whether this version or the briefer Insular account should be attributed to Mandeville. See Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 206-16.

combining *sapientia* and *curiositas*.⁷ More recently, Suzanne Yeager has connected these devotional passages with Mandeville's calls for religious reform, describing the *Book* as 'a devotional aid which offered both a diagnosis and a cure for the spiritual ills of western medieval Christendom'.⁸ Although Yeager has little to say about Mandeville's inclusion of *mirabilia*, such material can be understood as integral to late medieval devotional writing; this was particularly the case with the genre of visions, where travel, spiritual experience and the observation of earthly wonders were closely combined. Anthony Bale suggests that the *Book*'s marvels are in fact closely related to the *Book*'s spiritual aim since they serve 'the purpose of authenticating [the *Book*], because marvels and prodigies were what readers expected from this genre of writing'.⁹ Mandeville includes marvellous material not only for the entertainment of the reader, but also to enrich and develop his devotional agenda.

Mandeville's European pilgrim readers

For many of its readers, the *Book* was first and foremost the account of the Jerusalem pilgrimage promised by its author in the exordium. Many early manuscripts from across Europe refer to the text in traditional terms as an *itinerarium*, a denomination maintained in a number of early printed editions.¹⁰ The *Book* was also included in manuscript compilations with other pilgrimage accounts. Tzanaki observes its appearance alongside the *Itinerarium* of Johannes de Witte de Hese, the *Peregrinationes* of Jacopo da Verona and Ludolph von Sudeheim's *Liber de Terra Santa*, although it is notable that none of the examples she cites include redactions belonging to the Continental branch.¹¹ Tzanaki's assessment of marginalia and illustrations also points towards a consistent interest in the Holy Land, though she notes in the case of the former an increasing interest in material beyond a devotional

⁷ Donald Howard, 'The World of Mandeville's Travels', *Yearbook of English Studies* 1 (1971), 1-17 (p. 9); Christian Zacher, *Curiosity and Pilgrimage: the Literature of Discovery in Fourteenth-Century England* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 130-57.

⁸ Suzanne Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 109. Although Yeager analyses the Defective version, her comments are equally relevant to the Continental text.

⁹ Anthony Bale, 'European Travel Writing in the Middle Ages', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), ed. by Carl Thompson, 157-58.

¹⁰ The Vulgate Latin redaction, for example, is generally titled *Itinerarium a Terra Angliae in partes Hierosolymitanas et in ultiores transmarinas*.

¹¹ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences: A Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville (1371-1550)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 77.

scope and in the latter ‘a very definite progression from the *Book* seen as pilgrimage to an almost total eclipsing of this attitude by the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century editions’.¹²

The *Book* also exerted a broader influence on the literary culture associated with the Jerusalem pilgrimage, with numerous pilgrims using it as a source to supplement and refine their own accounts. The German Dominican Felix Fabri (d. 1502) wrote that, in preparation for his second pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483, he ‘collected all the stories of the pilgrimages of the crusaders, the tracts written by pilgrims, and descriptions of the Holy Land, and read them with care’.¹³ Mandeville was used by a number of pilgrims as a source for their own accounts. Fabri and a German contemporary, Arnold von Harff, both make extensive use of the *Book*. Fabri is particularly interested in lore concerning the Mediterranean and Holy Land, whilst von Harff, having described his own journey to Jerusalem, uses the *Book* as the basis for a fictional onwards journey to India, Ceylon and Madagascar, mirroring Mandeville’s own creative use of source material.¹⁴ In England, the chaplain of Sir Richard Guildford, a courtier to Henry VII who died in Jerusalem in 1506, used the *Book* chiefly as a reference for matters pertaining to biblical history in compiling a memorial account.¹⁵ Such examples demonstrate that, even amongst pilgrim audiences, the *Book* was presented, approached and reused in markedly different ways.

In addition to this necessarily limited audience of actual Jerusalem pilgrims, the *Book* also appealed to those unable to make the physical journey to the Holy Land who wished to learn of and engage with the concept of pilgrimage. Recent scholarship on Mandeville’s reception has increasingly linked the text with virtual pilgrimage: a devotional practice in which participants undertook an imaginative journey to Jerusalem in the hope of gaining the same spiritual benefits attained by actual pilgrim.¹⁶ The practice was particularly prevalent in enclosed order convents, where

¹² Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, pp. 71-2.

¹³ Felix Fabri, *The Book of Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, ed. and trans. by Aubrey Stewart, vol. I, part I (London: Palestine Pilgrim Text Society, 1896), p. 50.

¹⁴ Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, pp. 66-68.

¹⁵ Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁶ See in particular Kathryn Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). Two recent case studies are Kathryn Rudy, ‘A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal Ms. 212’, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 63, 4 (2000), 494-515, and Kathryn Beebe, ‘Reading Mental Pilgrimage in Context: The Imaginary

nuns would use visual and textual aids to conduct an itinerary around the holy sites, sometimes pacing out their precise dimensions in a mental engagement with sacred space. Pilgrimage accounts – both pre-existing works and those written specifically for this kind of use – were central to this practice.¹⁷ As Yeager has observed, the *Book* contains a wealth of material suited to this kind of use, and the presence of the text in monastic libraries across Europe would appear to confirm this.¹⁸ Recent research has further revealed a number of instances in which the *Book* was used as a source in the composition of texts intended specifically as an aid to virtual pilgrims. Alongside Fabri's *Sionpilger*, produced for this kind of use in Swabian convents, the English scholar William Wey drew extensively on Mandeville in producing his *Matter of Jerusalem* (1456-62), which was kept in a Jerusalem chapel built for devotional use at the Augustinian priory of Edington in Wiltshire.¹⁹ Although research into the textual culture of virtual pilgrimage in Italy is currently limited, this chapter will demonstrate that the *Book* was an important part of this distinct devotional landscape.

Italian pilgrim readers and readings

The northern Italian context in which the *Book* first circulated was one richly connected with the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Although the *Book* first entered Italy in the French Continental redaction, read largely in a courtly context and associated more with entertainment than devotion, many of the Latin and Italian manuscripts produced in the early fifteenth century attest to interest in pilgrimage on the parts of their scribes and readers. It is notable that the Veneto, an area that played a crucial role in the European pilgrimage trade, was an important centre of production for both the Latin and Italian versions of the text. While no surviving manuscripts can be linked directly to known pilgrims, they circulated among clergy and educated noblemen: the two social groups that comprised virtually all travellers to Jerusalem. There is also

Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri's "Die Zionpilger", *Essays in Medieval Studies* 25 (2008), 39-70.

¹⁷ Petrarch's *Itinerarium* (1358), contemporaneous with the *Book*, is situated in this literary context.

¹⁸ See Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages*, p. 40.

¹⁹ On Fabri, see *Pilgrim and Preacher: The Audiences and Observant Spirituality of Friar Felix Fabri (1437/8-1502)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 53; Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 152. For Wey, see Anthony Bale, "ut legi": Sir John Mandeville's Audience and Three Late-Medieval English Travellers to Jerusalem', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 38, 201-237. I am extremely grateful to Professor Bale for sharing his work with me.

evidence that Italian pilgrims came into contact with the *Book* in the Holy Land itself. Alessandro Ariosto, who travelled throughout the Levant between 1475 and 1479 on a mission to the Maronites in Lebanon, wrote that he had read the *Book* in Latin in Jerusalem.²⁰ The most likely location for this was the Franciscan monastery at Mount Zion where Alessandro, himself an Observant Franciscan, stayed (although no such manuscript is known to have survived).²¹

The few surviving manuscripts of the Vulgate redaction produced in Italy show evidence both of a primarily ecclesiastical circulation and of specific interest in pilgrimage. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. A. 187, produced near to Verona in 1445, includes none of the usual Vulgate chapter headings with the exception of those pertaining to the church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Templum Domini, which are given in red ink. A further rubricated marginal note in the scribal hand highlights the Holy Sepulchre itself, with a corresponding pilcrow in the body of the text. The manuscript also contains Latin annotations in a number of hands, with a particular concentration on Jerusalem and the Holy Sites, suggesting that it continued to circulate among readers with an interest in pilgrimage. Clearer evidence still can be found in Belluno. The manuscript's scribe, Leonisio Doglioni (d. 1421), was a prominent member of the chapter of Belluno Cathedral, serving as *vicario capitulare* during two interregnums and *vicario generale* to two successive bishops.²² He copied the Vulgate redaction of the *Book* in October 1415, adding Giovanni d'Andrea's *Novella sive commentarius in decretales epistolas Gregorii IX* to the manuscript in August of the following year. In January 1415, Leonisio had donated nine of his books to the chapter library, amongst them a copy of Solinus' *De mirabilibus mundi* and a number of works on St Jerome, including Giovanni d'Andrea's *Hierominianum*. With his interests in biblical history and the eastern world, it is easy to understand why Mandeville would have appealed to Leonisio; the fact that he states in the explicit of his copy that he intended to bequeath it to the same library indicates that he saw it as appropriate within an ecclesiastical setting.²³

²⁰ Alessandro Ariosto, *Itinerarium* (1476-1479) ed. Fabio Uliana (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2007), p. 346: 'cuius ego contextam historiam Latino sermone venusto satis Ierosolimis legi'.

²¹ See the manuscript inventory of the Biblioteca Generale della Custodia di Terra Santa at <<http://opac.bibliothecaterresanctae.org>> [accessed 9/8/16].

²² Paolo Pellegrini, 'Per la Bibliotheca Lolliniana di Belluno: i libri del decano Leonisio Doglioni (1415)', *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 39 (1996), 403-21 (p. 403).

²³ Belluno, fol. 44^v: '[...] et quem intendo ponere ac ponam et iam posui in libraria cathedralis ecclesie Belluni apud alios olim meos libros cum eadem conditione qua dictos libros inibi posui et firmavi'.

Alongside the standard Vulgate chapter headings, the manuscript is marked up with a marginal gloss in Leonisio's own hand, with a number of passages further highlighted with *manicula* and marginal lines that reveal an interest in references to devotional activities. Verses from scripture are noted throughout, usually with the formula 'nota versum'. The description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre receives particular attention: alongside glosses recording Christ's tomb and the location of Calvary, a marginal line highlights the Vulgate redactor's skepticism regarding the report of a lamp that miraculously goes out on Good Friday and relights on Easter Sunday.²⁴ Leonisio appears also to have been interested in prayer, noting the place where Christ is said to have taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer and marking a prayer for the souls of pagans – unique to the Vulgate redaction – as an 'oratione bona'.²⁵ His marginalia reveal that he paid significant attention to the episode of the Vale Perilous, marking it throughout with marginal lines, *manicula* and notes. The passage has clearly been approached as a lesson in piety. One of several annotations gives prominence to the *villani* drawn in by the promise of wealth, and notes that 'Iste erat simil[is] illi diviti que mo[r]tuus sepl[us] et in inferno ut dic[it] evangelium', drawing a parallel with the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the Gospel of Luke.²⁶ In contrast to these sinners led astray by temptation, Leonisio's marginalia underscore the Vulgate redaction's emphasizing of Sir John as a model of religious devotion. A red marginal line highlights Sir John's reiteration of the fact that his safe passage was ensured by his confession, taking of communion and making the sign of the cross; a further annotation draws attention to the spiritual marvels witnessed by the narrator and his companions in their unconscious state.²⁷ Leonisio's developed interest in the passage suggests that his donation of the *Book* to the chapter library at Belluno was prompted at least in part by his assessment of its devotional value.

Other manuscripts of the Italian version of the *Book* also reveal evidence of interest among scribes and readers in its devotional content. Of the twelve surviving manuscripts, five contain scribal incipits that explicitly highlight the Jerusalem

²⁴ Belluno fol. 10^r: 'Et quamvis id plurimi Christiani simpliciter in magno pietatis merito credant, plerisque tamen est in suspicione'.

²⁵ Belluno fol. 12^v: 'ubi Christus docuit pater noster'; fol. 28^r: 'ortatione auctoris bona usque ad finem huius capitulum'.

²⁶ Luke 16:19-31. The parable tells of a rich man and a beggar, named Lazarus, who both die; the former finds himself in hell, whilst the latter finds a place beside Abraham. In the Middle Ages, it was widely interpreted as the relation of a true event.

²⁷ Belluno fol. 38^r: 'nota aliud mirabile magnum et inauditum'.

itinerary or Sir John's status as a pilgrim.²⁸ That three of these – LBL, PP and NN – were produced in the 1460s in northeastern Italy suggests a particular localized trend at this time. This is further supported by the fact that LBL and another manuscript, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS Morgan 746 (NYP), constitute a subgroup of group β identified by the inclusion of interpolated material from the *Itinerario* of Gabriele Capodilista, a Paduan pilgrim who travelled to the Holy Land in 1458.²⁹ Although none of the surviving manuscripts are bound with other pilgrimage accounts, the Italian text is found alongside works of a devotional nature, from prayers and extracts from scripture to hagiographic texts and dream visions. Marginalia referring to the Holy Land is present throughout the Italian manuscript corpus, although in some instances this appears to be motivated more by an interest in history and lore than in the practice of pilgrimage. One example of this is MoS, in which marginal lines highlight the miracles of the lamp and weeping columns in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and descriptions of the Field of Flowers, the Dead Sea, the Fountain of Joel and the miraculous icon of Mary in the church at Sardenak. Other manuscripts evidence a more devotional concern. OB, copied in 1442 near Genoa by a scribe named Antonio del Gaio contains no chapter headings or significant deviations from the text, but the *incipit* focuses strongly on Christ's passion, whilst the explicit contains the remarkable statement that Antonio copied the manuscript for his *reperacione*.³⁰ The presence of marginal notes marking quotations from scripture for (incomplete) rubrication, as well as a series of Latin annotations that react strongly against Mandeville's representation of Greek and Eastern Christianity, suggests that the manuscript may have circulated in an ecclesiastical context.³¹

Further evidence of devotional interest in the *Book* in a religious setting can be found in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana It. VI 208, copied between 1518 and 1520 by a

²⁸ These are PP (1465), OB (1442), NN (1467) and LBL (1469).

²⁹ Capodilista's account is not known to have circulated widely before 1475, when it was printed at Perugia. The other manuscript within the subgroup, NYP, was produced in 1465 in nearby Ferrara.

³⁰ OB fol. 1^r: 'la terra sancta dove el nostro signore Jhesu Christo fuy preso flagelato crucifixo e sepolito'; fol. 83^r: 'Per non stare hociosso ne cadere in desperacione io me sono messo a scrivere per mia repericione'. The location is possibly San Quirico in Liguria, now part of Genoa. A Gallo family, originally of Levanto, is recorded in Genoa from 1380. An Antonio of this family wrote a history of Columbus *De navigatione Columbi*, in the 1490s; not the same one, as he was born later. See Elena del Gallo, 'Antonio Gallo' in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* vol. 51 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italian, 1998), pp. 420-22.

³¹ See Chapter 5.

Venetian Franciscan.³² The manuscript is a compendium of texts pertaining to the East copied from manuscript and print exemplars, including vernacular versions of Odoric's *Itinerarium*, Polo's *Devisement* and the *Navigazioni* of Alvise da Ca' da Mosto. In addition to the inclusion of a series of extracts from Mandeville, mostly of a marvelous nature, the text of Odoric's account includes a unique interpolation of Mandeville's description of the Vale Perilous, with Sir John identified as one of Odoric's companions.³³ Explicitly citing Mandeville's greater detail as the reason for the interpolation, the scribe also engages actively with the text in a manner that highlights the episode's theme of Christian piety. Having identified Odoric as one of the two Friars Minor mentioned by Mandeville, and underlined his status as a guide, the scribe adds a second interpolation that reintroduces material from the *Itinerarium*.³⁴

[...] io non volsi tochar cosa che vedesse, perché non me voleva levar dala mia devotione. Ma lo patre Udorico pigliò alquanto de quello thesoro e portollo per bono spacio de via, solum per provar se era vero o no o se pur era inganno de dyavoli. Ma vedendo che era puro oro, lo gitò da sí per non esser impedito per lo suo viazo, etiam per non far contra la sua sancta professione et anche io lo lassai per tema deli inimici che videa iacere per tutta la valle.³⁵

Odoric's rejection of the valley's riches is here given considerably greater dramatic force than in the original account, with an emphasis both on his piety (appropriate to his clerical status) and the moral example he sets for Sir John. Towards the conclusion

³² On the manuscript, see Lucio Monaco, 'I volgarizzamenti italiani della Relazione di Odorico da Pordenone', *Studi mediolatini e volgari*, 26 (1978-79), 179-220 and Alvise Andreose, "'Lo libro dele nove e stranie meravioxe cose": Ricerche sui volgarizzamenti italiani dell'*Itinerarium* del beato Odorico da Pordenone', *Rivista francescana di storia dottrina arte*, 38 (1998), 31-67.

³³ Venice, Biblioteca Marciana ms. It. VI 208 f. 25^r: 'De questa valle parla Zuan de Mandevilla piu diffusamente pero che lui fu in essa cun frate Uderico e cun so compagno'. An association between Odoric and Mandeville is not unique to this manuscript. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek Weiss. MS 40, a Latin manuscript of the *Itinerarium* produced in Germany in the fifteenth century contains a similar reference to the two as companions in its incipit: 'Incipit itinerarium fratris Oderici socii militis Mandavil per Indiam, licet hic prius et alter posterius peregrinationem suam descripsit'. See Francesca Maggioni, 'La redazione C9 della *Relatio* di Odorico da Pordenone: edizione critica', unpublished doctoral thesis, Università di Milano 2012, pp. vii-xiv. Similarly, the Michel Velser's German translation of the *Book*, produced in Piedmont in the 1390s, refers to Odoric as Mandeville's companion. See Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 219-20.

³⁴ Fol. 25v: 'Ma doi valenti homini frati minori **che ne guidavano, cioè frate Udorico e frate Benedecto**, che erano di Lonbardia [...]' (interpolation in bold).

³⁵ Fol. 26^r.

of the passage, Odoric is again cast in the role of spiritual guide, counselling the other travellers to remain steadfast in their faith:

Io credo certissimamente che se nuy non havessemo ricevuto el corpo de Cristo, che nuy seressimo ramasti lì tutti e perduti. Ma quilli doi sancti frati che erano in nostra compagnia, sempre ce confortavano che stesemo constanti nela fede nostra sancta.³⁶

These interpolations reveal not only that the scribe was extremely familiar with the episode as it appeared in both texts, but also that his reading was guided by an understanding of the episode's devotional value.

The Italian version of the *Book* also appealed to a lay audience interested in pilgrimage. The most developed example of this is LBL, produced in 1469. Written in a neat, cursive hand, the manuscript belongs to a subgroup characterized by interpolations taken from Capodilista's *Itinerario*, which circulated only locally before it was printed at Perugia in 1475.³⁷ A number of linguistic features appear to suggest a Paduan origin, alongside a watermark almost identical to Briquet 11745, dated to Venice in 1473 and Padua in 1479.³⁸ The manuscript is marked by a strong concern with pilgrimage that can be observed both in textual interpolations and paratextual features. Alongside references to Capodilista, the copyist includes a poem taken from the *Itinerarium* of William of Boldensele, a Dominican friar from Saxony who travelled to the Levant in 1333 on a mission for the papal curia.³⁹ The manuscript also contains a unique, rubricated preamble to the description of Jerusalem that underlines the importance of the passage to the scribe:

Qui intreremo neli perdoni de la santa et excelente citade de Jerusalem dove el nostro signore misser Yhesu Christo recevete tanta passioni tanti dolori aflicione et martorii. Visiteremo quelli santi et devotissimi luoghi chon

³⁶ Fol. 26^v.

³⁷ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 746.

³⁸ Charles M. Briquet, *Les filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1907), vol. II, p. 157.

³⁹ British Library, MS Additional 41329, fol. 16^r. Known as Terentia's Poem, it is thought to have been carved as a graffito on the now destroyed limestone casing of the Pyramid of Cheops by a second-century Roman tourist in remembrance of her brother, Decimus Gentianus. See Emily A. Hemelrijk, *Matrona docta: Educated Women in the Roman Elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 335.

grandissima devotione et reverentia com li chuori nostri poi che personalmente non lo posiamo fare come saria el nostro dexiderio et perche i sono assai peligrinazi li andaro descrivando come li mete el maestro mio misser Zuane da Mediavila el quale personalmente tuti li vixito farone parecchie parte perche in uno capitolo solo fastidieria li lettori elli auditorii. Ma pero non mi deschie pero ne partiro da lo esempio mio fato per el dito misser Zuane da Mediavilla.⁴⁰

The most notable aspect of this interpolation is the clearly defined relationship between the physical pilgrimage of the narrator Sir John and the invitation to the reader to imaginatively follow this journey in their own heart. The practice of virtual pilgrimage gained significant currency in the fifteenth century, with practitioners often repurposing existing pilgrimage accounts for use as contemplative aids in order to more accurately imagine the sacred itinerary.⁴¹ Although we know little about the context in which LBL was produced and read, there are clear signs that it was intended at least to some extent for use as a devotional tool. That the scribe divided material on Jerusalem into separate chapters rather than maintaining the epitextual format of his exemplar demonstrates a concern with the clear identification of holy sites, further underlined by the systematic listing of locations carrying indulgences. The repetition of the phrase ‘seguiteremo le perdoni’ in the additional chapter headings serves both to encourage the reader to follow Sir John’s itinerary and to mark out spiritual benefits, whilst references to both *lettori* and *auditori* suggest the manuscript was intended for the monitored communal consumption that typified the practice of virtual pilgrimage in a monastic setting.

The advent of print dramatically altered the fortune of the *Book* in Italy, making it accessible to a wide audience with a diverse range of interests. Italian printers, perhaps aware of the *Book*’s potential for broad appeal, were more radical than their European counterparts in moving away from the presentation of the *Book* as a pilgrimage text. In addition to a title emphasizing the marvellous content of the second half of the text, the chapter headings introduced in the 1480 *editio princeps* diminish the importance of the pilgrimage itinerary. References to pilgrimage sites are

⁴⁰ BL, MS Additional 41329, fol. 22^r.

⁴¹ Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent*, p. 256.

generic rather than specific ('Qui si fa menzione di molti luoghi santi e devoti'; 'Qui si fa menzione di alcuni luoghi santi') and contrast with more thorough rubrics detailing Holy Land lore, whilst the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is mentioned as a location of marvels rather than a pilgrimage site.⁴² This trend away from pilgrimage is reflected in the Italian editions published with illustrated title pages, which in contrast to other European editions contain no religious allusions.

Whilst Italian printers did not directly target an audience interested in pilgrimage, readers continued to highlight and comment on the depiction of the Holy Land. Rome, BAV Stamp. Ross. 1526 exhibits instances of marginal highlighting throughout the pilgrimage itinerary that refer almost exclusively to pilgrimage sites, whilst the annotations that appear throughout the first half of Venice, Marciana Inc. 0821 systematically note the holy sites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On occasion, Italian readers also used copies of the *Book* to record their own devotional experiences. A Genoese reader of Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana 51.A.28 underlined the textual reference to the plate that bore John the Baptist's head, with an accompanying annotation attesting that he had witnessed the relic himself.⁴³ As late as the 1617 the Venetian Giovanni Tiepolo, dean of San Marco and soon to be appointed patriarch of Venice, would quote from the *Book* in his treatise on the relics housed in the basilica.⁴⁴ Although pilgrimage may have been a minority concern for later Italian readers, instances such as these evidence a continued interest in this aspect of the *Book*. This chapter will now explore how evidence of this can also be found through its influence on the Italian production of devotional and pilgrimage literature.

⁴² M1 fol. d4r: 'D'una lampada che sempre arde inanzi al Sepolcro Santo, la quale el venerdi santo si accende da per se stessa; e del monte Calvario; e dove fu trovato el capo d'Adamo; e di molte altre cose che ivi sono'

⁴³ Fol. E2r: 'il quale ho veduto in chiesa nostra'. The plate was brought to the city from Mira following the First Crusade, where it was kept in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo.

⁴⁴ *Trattato delle santissime reliquie, ultimamente ritrovate nel Santuario della Chiesa di San Marco* (Venice: Antonio Pinelli, 1617), p. 80: 'Che oltre alle longhe et acute spine che furono nella corona di Christo ve ne fossero anco di picciole, et minute, recitassi da Giovanni da Mandavilla nel suo libro delle meraviglie di Terra Santa con queste parole: "et io ho alcuna di queste pretiose spine, che pare una spina bianca, et fommi donata per grande spetialitade, imperoche ne sono molte di rotte nel vasello dove sta la corona, le qual se rompeno quando el vassel se muta, et è portato a veder à gran signori"'. On the treatise, see Helen Deborah Walberg, 'The Writings and Artistic Patronage of Patriarch Giovanni Tiepolo (1570-1631): A Preliminary Investigation', *Studi veneziani* 62-64 (2011), 193-224.

The *Book* and visions of travel

As this study has already discussed, the genre of dream visions (*visiones*) was an important part of the literary context in which the *Book* was produced.⁴⁵ Though achieving prominence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, visionary writing had been a part of European literary culture since late antiquity, with texts such as the fourth-century *Visio Pauli*, the tenth-century *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* and the twelfth-century *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* circulating throughout Latin Christendom. In the fourteenth century, the genre increasingly influenced vernacular literary production, with texts such as *Piers Plowman* and Dante's *Commedia* alluding to and engaging with the tradition of *visiones*. Whilst these allegorical works often shared key narrative features – particularly the device of a sleeping narrator who is led on a didactic terrestrial or otherworldly journey by an instructive guide – they became increasingly varied in their form and content. As such, the *Book* can be understood not only to be influenced by this tradition but, in particular passages, to engage with and actively imitate it. As elsewhere in Europe, Italian readers associated Mandeville with this tradition: FN, the earliest surviving manuscript of the Italian version, is included in a manuscript compilation alongside the *Viaggio dei tre monaci al paradise terrestre*, as well the mystical story of the *Sette dormienti di Efeso*. As this section of the chapter will explore, the *Book* also exerted an important influence on the production of such texts.

Christine de Pizan's *Le chemin de longe estude* (1403)

One such example is the *Chemin de longue estude*, written in the first decade of the fourteenth century by the Italian French author Christine de Pizan. Born in Venice in around 1365, Christine moved to France at a young age when her father was appointed royal astrologer to Charles V. Following the latter's death and that of her husband Etienne in the 1380s, she took up writing as a means to support her widowed

⁴⁵ On this and related traditions, see Kathryn Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Alison Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Giuseppe Ledda, 'Dante e la tradizione delle visioni medievali', *Lettere classensi* 37 (2007), 119-42 (pp. 119-23); and Cesare Segre, 'L'"itinerarium animae" nel Duecento e Dante', *Lettere classensi* 13 (1984), 9-32.

mother and three children, producing poetic works in French under the patronage of a number of prominent figures at the French and English courts. This was a moment at which significant Italian influences were being imported into the French court, not least from one of Christine's patrons, Valentina Visconti, who also played a significant role in the early dissemination of the *Book* in Italy.⁴⁶ The *Chemin* demonstrates Christine's engagement with Mandeville as a model for a spiritual journey, atypical of the romance approach prevalent amongst courtly readers of the Continental text.

Completed at a time when she had become an established literary figure and dedicated to Charles VI, the *Chemin* presents an allegorical vision in the form of a narrative poem. Under the guidance of the Cumaean Sibyl, a dreaming narrator (Christine herself) undertakes a journey along the Path of Long Study, taking in the wonders of the world before ascending to the heavens. Here, Christine arrives the court of Queen Reason, where there is an ongoing debate concerning the virtues of the perfect prince. Eventually, it is decided that the French court is the worthiest earthly example and Christine is appointed to return there as Reason's emissary, waking from the dream at home in her bed. Although Christine explicitly refers to Dante as her key textual model, Paget Toynbee has shown that the geography of the terrestrial journey is based predominantly on that of the *Book*.⁴⁷ Christine's interest in the eastern world was likely to have been prompted by the visit of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus to the French court in 1402, and it is clear that she saw the *Book* as an appropriate source.⁴⁸

Christine's reuse of the *Book* reveals a deep engagement with the text's sacred geography and devotional value. Following Sir John's trajectory, the narrative moves from Constantinople to the Earthly Paradise via Jerusalem, the Indies, Cathay and the land of Prester John. As narrator Christine is keenly interested in eastern *mirabilia*,

⁴⁶ The French manuscript Mo is thought to have been produced at Pavia for Valentina. See Chapter 3.

⁴⁷ Paget Toynbee, 'Christine de Pisan and Sir John Maundeville', *Romania* 21 (1892), 228-39.

⁴⁸ See Shigemi Sasaki, 'Chateaumorant et *Le Chemin* de Christine de Pisan: à propos des ruines de Constantinople' in Jean-Claude Aubailly et al. eds., *"Et c'est la fin pour que sommes ensemble": hommage à Jean Dufournet: littérature, histoire, et langue du moyen âge* (Paris: Champion, 1993), pp. 1261-70, and Charity Cannon Willard, 'Une source oubliée du voyage imaginaire de Christine de Pisan' in the same volume, pp. 321-26. For Dante's influence on the *Chemin*, see Kevin Brownlee, 'Le moi "lyrique" et la généalogie littéraire. Christine de Pisan et Dante dans le *Chemin de long estude*', in *Musique naturele* [sic.]: *Interpretationen zur französischen Lyrik des Spätmittelalters*, ed. by Wolf-Dieter Stempel, (Munich: Fink, 1995), pp. 105-139, and Yvonne Batard, 'Dante et Christine de Pisan (1364-1430)', in *Dante nel pensiero e nella esegesi dei secoli XIV e XV. Atti del III congresso di studi danteschi (Melfi, 27 settembre-2 ottobre 1970)* (Florence: Olschki, 1975), pp. 271-76.

yet she also displays a profoundly Christian understanding of the territory through which she passes. Travelling towards Jerusalem, she notes that

Alames tousdis en montant,
Approuchant vers la Terre sainte,
Mais ains vy estrangeté mainte;
Quant la me vy, j'en fus joyeuse.⁴⁹

1236-9

The reference to ascent suggests a careful reading of Mandeville's reference to the centrality of Jerusalem in the chapter concerning the shape of the earth, where the elevation of the city in relation to both East and West is used as evidence for the earth's sphericity.⁵⁰ At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Christine (as protagonist) undertakes her personal *devocions* before, in an echo of the *Book*, measuring and reporting the shape and size of Christ's tabernacle. This recognition of the importance of spiritual space for imaginative engagement is enhanced by Christine's kissing of the tomb, a devotional act that supplants her textual model.⁵¹

Beyond Jerusalem, the itinerary towards the Earthly Paradise takes in a number of the *Book's* locations. Christine worships at the tomb of Saint Catherine and visits the shrine of St Thomas in India, but also witnesses a number of eastern marvels, among them the monstrous races, the Trees of the Sun and Moon and the riches of Cathay. This juxtaposition of the sacred and marvellous is summed up by Christine's statement that she has witnessed 'maintes fontaines merveilleuses, maintes vallees perilleuses' – a clear reference to the *Book's* spiritual crucible of the Vale Perilous.⁵² Rather than being auxiliary to the primary focus of the journey, Christine's awareness of earthly diversity is shown to be central to her spiritual awakening. The Sibyl's instruction in toponyms, the nature of plants and living beings underscores the intellectual worth of the terrestrial journey, which is later paralleled by her education

⁴⁹ Andrea Tarnowski ed., *Le chemin de longue étude* (Paris: Livre de poche, 2000), pp. 160-62.

⁵⁰ *TBJM*, p. 113: 'For in going from Scotland or England towards Jerusalem one is always climbing, for our land is in the low part of the earth to the west... For the earth and the sea are of round form, as I told you above, and as one climbs on one side one descends on the other'.

⁵¹ Mandeville states that the sepulchre is walled off and that pilgrims are only able to kiss a rock that has broken off from it.

⁵² Tarnowski ed., *Le chemin de longue étude*, p. 172-3.

at the court of Reason. This is underlined when Christine reaches the Earthly Paradise at the apex of her terrestrial journey. Like Sir John she is unable to enter, but in an echo of the *Book*, the Sibyl's description of the holy place parallels the author Christine's learning thorough reading. Moreover, when Christine is elected to fulfil her role at the French court it is made clear that this is because of her literary ability and love of learning. Andrea Tarnowski reads the *Chemin* as a text written at a turning point in Christine's career in which she tests the possibility of her vocation as a writer.⁵³ Her foray into the genre of visions and engagement with Mandeville within this context, however, also shows that she associated the *Book* with this genre, and that she considered its representation of earthly diversity to be central to a broader spiritual aim.

The Riccardiana version of the *Viaggio dei tre monaci al paradiso terrestre* (fifteenth century)

The *Book*'s influence on the production of vernacular *visiones* can also be observed in its influence on the fifteenth-century tradition of the *Viaggio dei tre monaci al paradiso terrestre*, which tells the story of three devout monks who journey from Rome to the Earthly Paradise. Thought only to have circulated in Italy, the *Viaggio* survives in three distinct versions, the oldest of which forms part of a fourteenth-century *Vita* of St Macarius the Roman of Mesopotamia that was read both in Latin and Italian. A second, more widely read vernacular version survives in numerous manuscript copies; it is this version that, as mentioned above, is bound alongside the *Book* in FN.⁵⁴ This section, however, will focus on a third version of the text that survives in a single manuscript produced in Tuscany in the fifteenth century and now conserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence.⁵⁵ Although based primarily on the St Macarius version, the Riccardiana redaction is particularly notable since it

⁵³ Andrea Tarnowski, 'The Lessons of Experience and the *Chemin de long estude*' in Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady eds., *Christine de Pizan: a casebook* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 181-197.

⁵⁴ The vernacular translation of the first version can be found in Domenico Cavalca, *Vite dei santi Padri*, ed. Carlo Delcorno (Florence: Galluzzo, 2009), vol. 1, pp. 1441-65. The second version is transcribed by Giuseppe Mazzatinti in *Inventario dei manoscritti italiani delle Biblioteche di Francia* (Rome: Presso i Principali Librai, 1887), vol. II, pp. 64-75.

⁵⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 683, a compendium of a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century vernacular and religious works in a number of hands. This version has been edited by Giuliana Ravaschietto: *Il viaggio dei tre monaci al paradiso terrestre* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1997).

introduces a wealth of new material to the *Viaggio*, much of it drawn from the *Book*, with a clear focus on eastern *mirabilia*. In her introduction to the edited version of the text, Eleonora Vincenti hypothesizes that the author was a lay individual who adapted the *Viaggio* to create ‘un testo che unisse l’utile al dilettevole’.⁵⁶ Here, we shall explore how the scribe of the Riccardiana version engaged with and imitated the *Book*’s representation of *mirabilia* not out of an attempt to unite two disparate genres, but precisely because he, like Mandeville, appreciated the relevance of earthly marvels within the context of visionary allegory.

Like its textual predecessor contained within the *Vita di San Macario*, the Riccardiana version of the *Viaggio* begins with three monks from Rome – Theosio, Sergio and Chino – embarking on a search for the Earthly Paradise.⁵⁷ Here, the monks are described as being inspired by God to ‘abandonare questo misero mondo e d’andare a vedere le meravigliose cose di Dio’, a motivation that immediately signals the relationship between the marvellous and the devotional itinerary.⁵⁸ Arriving at a monastery in Mesopotamia on the banks of the Tigris, they observe a branch floating downstream covered in fruit and flowers, with golden leaves: a detail taken from the second version of the text. The three monks interpret this as a miraculous sign, with a response that again draws together devotion and the marvelous: ‘Benedetta sia et lauldata la potenza di Dio per queste cose così meravigliose!’⁵⁹ Prompted by this, the monks decide to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Whilst this is reported in both earlier versions, it is notable that the Riccardiana text dedicates significantly more space to this passage, introducing a number of new pilgrimage sites and giving specific lengths of time spent in devotion at each location. Similarities with the *Book*, including the progression of the itinerary and references to the Templum Domini, suggest that it may have been influential in the development of this fictional pilgrimage account.

From the Holy Land the three monks continue their journey through Persia and India Major, where they encounter a series of foreign peoples, animals and monstrous races. As before, the author of the Riccardiana text takes his cue from the San Macario redaction, in which the monks encounter Cynocephali and pygmies;

⁵⁶ Eleonora Vincenti, “Introduzione” in Ravaschietto ed. *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, pp. v-xvii, p. xiv.

⁵⁷ For concordances between the three versions, see the table provided in *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. xv-xvii.

⁵⁸ Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 5.

however, here again the itinerary is significantly expanded to encompass encounters with a number of other monstrous races, including Blemmyae, monopods and Amazons. Although the monks' response is invariably one of marvel, their prayers of thanks to God consistently relate this to their ongoing journey of spiritual enlightenment.⁶⁰ This juxtaposition of the marvelous and the devotional is highlighted when the monks stumble across a remote convent at which they are forced to stay for a year. Although the abbess denies their request to leave, stating that those who wish to travel the world are spiritually underdeveloped, their subsequent escape sees them fast for a full day before the safety of a monastery inhabited by more enlightened monks.⁶¹ Like Mandeville, the author of the Riccardiana text goes to great lengths to suggest that the observation of earthly diversity may itself be a devotional experience.

Two markedly similar episodes further recall the devotional agenda of the *Book*. In the course of their eastern journey, the monks are required to traverse two dangerous valleys, the first filled with dragons and serpents, and the second completely dark. Here, again, the author of the Riccardiana text substantially develops the brief references made to these trials in the San Macario text, explicitly relocating them to valleys in a manner strongly reminiscent of the *Book*'s account of the Vale Perilous. In both episodes, the monks' safe passage is explicitly attributed to their devotion and making of the sign of the cross, recalling Mandeville's statement that 'good Christians who are in good standing and stable in the faith enter without danger, for they confess and make the sign of the cross over themselves'.⁶² The second valley is particularly reminiscent of the *Book*: it is described as 'una valle buia buia' in which the monks, like Sir John and his companions, are unable to see even each other and are beset by loud cries for forty days and nights. This period of time clearly parallels that endured by Christ in the wilderness, but the similarities with Sir John's own spiritual crucible are evident.

The monks' journey towards the Earthly Paradise next takes them through the kingdom of Prester John. As in the *Book*, an ornate palace and unfathomable riches are juxtaposed with the humility and piety of the Christian ruler. In another addition

⁶⁰ For example, on encountering pygmies: 'Allora noi laudavamo e ringraziavamo Iddio dell'opere sue meravigliose' (Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 9).

⁶¹ Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 15: 'l'uomo et la femina che vuole andare per lo mondo è poco carnale dello amore di Dio'. *Carnale* is here used in a positive sense, meaning 'familiar'.

⁶² Higgins ed., *TBJM*, p. 166. Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 10: 'et credavamo morire il dì cento volte et noi ricorrevamo al Santo Segno della Croce che ci schampasse di quello lugo così crudele'.

unique to the Riccardiana version, the prelate offers to show the monks his most precious possession, leading them into private garden walled with coral, amber and precious stones – a *locus amoenus* typical of the genre of *visiones*. When Prester John indicates a rosemary plant, their dismissive laughter (presumably intended to be echoed by the reader) prompts him to deny them knowledge of the herb's true virtues. The monks swiftly learn their lesson, for, in a parallel episode that immediately follows, they arrive at a convent at the foot of the mountain of Paradise and humbly accept the sisters' invitation into the convent garden, where they find cabbages covered in manna that satisfies their hunger unlike any earthly food.⁶³ The episode is almost certainly inspired by the *Book's* account of the manna found in the land of Job, in which Mandeville conflates Odoric's reports of the manna gum and manna ash commonly described in medieval herbals with the food sent by God to provide for the wandering Israelites.⁶⁴ The spiritual value of this experience is underlined when the monks, giving thanks to God for sustaining them, hear 'uno grande suono dolcissimo et soave', prompting them to ascend the mountain where they are admitted to the Earthly Paradise by Enoch and Elijah.

Like Christine de Pizan's *Chemin de long estude*, the Riccardiana version of the *Viaggio dei tre monaci* integrates Mandevillean marvels into the spiritual allegory of the vision genre. Whilst Giuliana Ravaschietto observes in the latter 'carattere di ambiguità tra relazione realistica di un viaggio, seppure presunto, e visione', the earthly voyage and spiritual vision are in fact closely related.⁶⁵ In both works, the witnessing of earthly marvels forms part of the spiritual experience that the travellers undergo. Notably, these are not solely spiritual signs or miracles, but a broader range of earthly marvels.⁶⁶ As Zygmunt Baranski has observed, in the fifteenth century the distinctions drawn in antiquity between *miracula* and other forms of marvels had become largely redundant, with all subsumed into the more general category of

⁶³ *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 21: '[...] et pareano una meravigliosa cosa a vederlle; et ciascuna di quelle foglie era caricha di manna bianchissima che venia da cielo [...] et pareaci ad mangiare la migliore cosa che mai si mangiasse e lla più dolce'.

⁶⁴ *TBJM*, p. 95-6: 'Manna is called angels' bread: it is something white, very sweet and most delicious [...] and it comes from the dew of Heaven that falls on the grass in that country, and it thickens and becomes white and sweet'.

⁶⁵ Ravaschietto ed., *Il viaggio dei tre monaci*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ In his seminal essay on medieval marvels, Jacques Le Goff describes miracles as 'one relatively circumscribed element [...] in the vast domain of the marvelous'. See Le Goff, 'The Marvelous in the Medieval West', in *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), pp. 27-44.

mirabilia.⁶⁷ For both Christine and the scribe of the Riccardiana version of the *Viaggio*, the Book's description of eastern marvels was of no less spiritual value than its portrayal of Jerusalem's holy sites.

The *Book* and virtual pilgrimage

As this chapter has already discussed, the *Book* circulated widely among readers with a specific interest in the Jerusalem pilgrimage, and has been particularly connected with the practice of virtual pilgrimage. As the work of Jeffrey Hamburger, Kathryn Rudy, Kathryn Beebe and others has shown, virtual pilgrimage was practised on a wide scale throughout Europe.⁶⁸ It was particularly prevalent in enclosed order convents where nuns, prevented by their vows from travelling to the Holy Land, used visual and textual aids to conduct an itinerary around the holy sites, sometimes pacing out their precise dimensions or even identifying their peers with figures from scriptural history. In addition to this formal, highly regulated practice, it is becoming increasingly clear that the imaginative mental engagement of individuals was key to broader conceptions of pilgrimage in the fifteenth century, providing a means to engage virtually with sacred space. As an anonymous fourteenth-century Italian wrote in an account of his own pilgrimage, this could be carried out by 'ciascuna persona stando nella casa sua, pensando in ciascuno luogho che di sotto è scritto, e in ogni santo luogo dica uno paternostro e ave maria'.⁶⁹

This section offers case studies of two individual instances of engagement with the *Book* on the part of two Italian pilgrims writing specifically for an audience of virtual pilgrims in the fifteenth century, a period that has been referred to as the 'golden age of *outré-mer* travel accounts'.⁷⁰ Accounts of pilgrim authors can be

⁶⁷ Zygmunt Baranski, "Sole nuovo, luce nuova": saggi sul rinnovamento culturale in Dante (Turin: Scriptorium, 1996), p. 165. For a discussion of *mirabilia* and an associated bibliography, see pp. 165-7. See in particular Jacques Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 17-39.

⁶⁸ See in particular Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages*.

⁶⁹ Michele Melga ed., *Viaggi in Terrasanta descritti da un anonimo trecentista e non mai fin qui stampati* (Naples: Stamperia del Fibreno, 1862), p. 7.

⁷⁰ Béatrice Dansette, 'Les relations du pèlerinage outre-mer: des origines à l'âge d'or', in *Croisades et pèlerinages: Récits, chroniques et voyages en Terre sainte*, ed. by Danielle Régnier-Bohler (Paris: R. Laffont, 1997), 881-92, p. 889 (my translation). For Italian accounts in this period, see Franco Cardini, *In Terrasanta: pellegrini italiani fra medioevo e prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2002) and J. K. Hyde, 'Italian Pilgrimage Literature in the Late Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 72, 3 (1990), 13-33.

understood as part of a singular genre (albeit one expressing a broad range of interests and concerns) of first-person narratives written in the vernacular that gained increasing popularity with both religious and lay readers. On their return from Jerusalem, pilgrims who decided to make a written record of their experiences regularly consulted the accounts of their predecessors, sometimes copying material extensively, to the extent that much of the corpus of fifteenth-century pilgrimage writing is characterized by networks of interpolation and borrowing, both acknowledged and unacknowledged.⁷¹ A number of recent studies have sought to identify whether any individual pilgrimage account functioned as an *ur*-text, acting as a specific model onto which subsequent pilgrims projected their own experiences – an objective that perhaps fails to appreciate the complex and nuanced relationships between individual texts and the growing corpus of antecedent accounts, as well as the widespread practice of compilation.⁷² I make no such claims about the Italian version of the *Book*, but instead will explore its influence on two very different groups of pilgrims: the Paduan noblemen Gabriele and Antonio Capodilista in the late 1450s and the Tuscan priests Michele da Figline and Antonio del Lavacchio in the 1480s and '90s. These two case studies demonstrate the relevance of Mandeville to Italian pilgrims from both scholarly and clerical backgrounds and shed light on the ways in which the *Book* was repurposed in the production of texts for use in the practice of virtual pilgrimage.

Gabriele Capodilista's *Itinerario* (c. 1459) and the Paduan convent of San Bernardino

Having been incorporated into Venetian territory in 1405, by the middle of the fifteenth century Padua had become a thriving and cosmopolitan university town with

⁷¹ The German Dominican Felix Fabri (d. 1502) wrote that in preparation for his second pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483 he 'collected all the stories of the pilgrimages of the crusaders, the tracts written by pilgrims, and descriptions of the Holy Land, and read them with care' (Felix Fabri, *The Book of Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. by Aubrey Stewart, vol. I, part I (London: Palestine Pilgrim Text Society, 1896), p. 50).

⁷² See Josephie Brefeld, *A Guidebook for the Jerusalem Pilgrimage in the Late Middle Ages: A Case for Computer-Aided Textual Criticism* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994). For the Italian context, see Kathryn Blair Moore, 'Textual Transmission and Pictorial Transformations: The Post-Crusade Image of the Dome of the Rock in Italy', *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 27 (2010), 51-78.

strong connections to the Venetian pilgrimage trade.⁷³ Proximity to Venice, less than a day's ride away, ensured a steady stream of pilgrims every spring and the Basilica di Sant'Antonio, itself a major pilgrimage destination since the thirteenth century, was often visited by those waiting to depart for the voyage to Jaffa. On occasion, the academic interest of noblemen returning to Europe from the Holy Land prompted them to linger at Padua on their return: John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester and one of a number of Englishmen to study in Padua, spent two years at the *studio* following his pilgrimage of 1458.⁷⁴ As has already been explored, LBL offers clear indications of engagement with the *Book* as an aid to virtual pilgrimage in Padua during this period. It is particularly intriguing therefore that in composing his *Itinerario*, from which several interpolations in LBL are taken, the Paduan nobleman Gabriele Capodilista himself drew extensively on the *Book* in order to craft an account appropriate for an audience of virtual pilgrims.

Gabriele was born sometime in the second decade of the fifteenth century into one of the most important families associated with the thriving University of Padua. His father, Giovanni Francesco Capodilista, had taught canon and civil law since 1401 and at least two of his brothers went on to become professors in the same faculty.⁷⁵ Although it is not known where Gabriele completed his studies, as a young man he spent many years in the service of Ludovico Scarampi Mezzarota, a Paduan cardinal who occupied a number of important offices, including that of Camerlengo, during a successful ecclesiastical career.⁷⁶ Gabriele was a man of both clear religious conviction and significant financial means and the first of his recorded travels was to the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Puy in Auvergne in 1440, where he saw the relic of the Holy Prepuce. In 1458, he undertook to travel to Jerusalem on pilgrimage in the company of his cousin and close friend, Antonio Capodilista. The two galleys that sailed from Venice in May of that year carried around two hundred pilgrims, many of whom had already travelled for hundreds of miles across Europe.⁷⁷ Remarkably, no fewer than six individual accounts of the pilgrimage survive. Alongside Capodilista's

⁷³ On the University of Padua in this period, see François Dupuigrenet Desroussilles, 'L'Università di Padova dal 1405 al Concilio di Trento', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. 3 part 2, pp. 607-47.

⁷⁴ See Rosemary Mitchell, *John Tiptoft (1427-70)* (London: Longmans, 1938).

⁷⁵ See Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 183-89 and Elda Martellozzo Forin, 'Conti palatini e lauree conferite per privilegio: l'esempio padovano del sec. XV', *Annali di storia delle università italiane* 3 (1999), 79-119.

⁷⁶ See Pio Paschini *Lodovico Cardinal Camerlengo* (Rome: Facultas Theologica Pontificii Athenaei Lateranensis, 1939).

⁷⁷ Mitchell, *The Spring Voyage*, p. 69.

own, another two were penned by the Italians Roberto Sanseverino d'Aragona, a Milanese nobleman and *condottiere*, and Giovanni Matteo Butigella, who accompanied Sanseverino in the Milanese party.⁷⁸ Capodilista and Sanseverino became firm friends in the course of the pilgrimage, and although they parted ways in July of that year – the former to return home, the latter extending his sojourn to take in Mount Sinai and Egypt – they were later reunited in Padua, where Sanseverino stayed for three days in the Capodilista household following his return to Italy. The two pilgrims must have compared notes during this time, since Gabriele's description of Egypt is based primarily on Sanseverino's own account.⁷⁹ That the *Itinerario* forms part of this complex pattern of borrowing and reuse has been demonstrated by Anna Laura Lepschy, who has shown that the later account of the Milanese statesman Santo Brasca is in many places an almost verbatim copy of Capodilista's earlier work.

Gabriele Capodilista's *Itinerario* survives in four manuscripts, the earliest of which was penned by Antonio Capodilista to be presented to the abbess and nuns of the convent of San Bernardino in Padua.⁸⁰ A sumptuous copy, it included an introductory note in the hand of Gabriele, an illustration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and maps of the Holy Land and Sinai. Whilst the manuscript is not dated, it was likely produced at some point in 1459 and certainly no earlier than Sanseverino's visit in January of that year. The *Itinerario* is an assiduously researched account: Gabriele drew on a number of sources to supplement his personal observations, including Marino Sanudo's *Secreta fidelium crucis* and Niccolò da Poggibonsi's *Libro d'oltramare*.⁸¹ Appropriate prayers to be said at the holy places are also provided in Latin, possibly copied directly from one of the pamphlets of processional

⁷⁸ The other three accounts were produced by the German Anton Pelchinger, an anonymous Dutch pilgrim and the Englishman William Wey. It is intriguing that both Wey and Capodilista made extensive use of Mandeville in recording their experiences, although the two travelled on separate ships and neither makes any mention of the other in his account.

⁷⁹ Although Capodilista returned to Padua from Jerusalem, he includes a description of the journey to Mount Sinai and Cairo, identical in the places named to that of Sanseverino. See Anna Laura Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa di Santo Brasca (1480) con L'Itinerario di Gabriele Capodilista (1458)* (Milan: Longanesi, 1966), p. 33.

⁸⁰ The manuscript was sold to a private collector in 1940; its current whereabouts are unknown. See *Libri insigni XIV-XVI secolo* (Milan: Hoepli, 1940), p. 4. Two fifteenth-century copies are held in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France Ms. Italien 2121 and Ms. Italien 896; the latter appears to be copied from the printed edition of 1475. A sixteenth-century copy is in the British Library (MS Add. 17481). For greater detail on the convent of San Bernardino, see Maria Sandano, *I monasteri scomparsi di Santa Chiara "nova cella" e San Bernardino da Siena a Padova: un recupero storico* (Padua: Il prato, 2000).

⁸¹ Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 34. The most conclusive evidence of Capodilista's borrowing is his inclusion of Greek inscriptions at Golgotha, otherwise unique to Mandeville.

that were available for pilgrims to purchase in both Venice and Jerusalem. Although the influence of the *Book* has been previously noted, earlier studies have not recognized the full extent to which the text underpins Capodilista's account of the Holy Land.

A close comparison of the two texts shows that much of the material regarding pilgrimage sites both in and outside of Jerusalem is taken directly from Mandeville. Capodilista demonstrates a level of critical engagement with his source material, using the *Book* to supplement his own experiences rather than submitting to a pre-existing textual framework. Prefaced by an account of the voyage to Jaffa, the itinerary of the holy sites integrates excerpts from the *Book* pertaining mainly to biblical history. These are often rephrased and in some instances Capodilista uses his source selectively: the description of Hebron, for example, is structured around that of Mandeville but omits the more fantastical reports of Holy Land lore. The overriding impression is that Capodilista used the *Book* more as an aide-memoire than an explicit textual model, and it is noteworthy that the passages most obviously copied from Mandeville are given in instances where Capodilista himself was unable to visit a holy site, such as the description of the Templum Domini.⁸² This suggests that, like other pilgrims, Capodilista borrowed from an earlier account in order to complete, rather than overwrite, his own experiences.

Capodilista's desire to provide a comprehensive account of the holy sites may well have been motivated by the use to which he intended the *Itinerario* be put. As a Poor Clare convent, San Bernardino was typical of the enclosed environment in which virtual pilgrimage was most often practiced, and, as Pnina Arad argues convincingly, the maps and illustration included in the manuscript were clearly intended for devotional use.⁸³ A close reading of the preface to the *Itinerario* confirms that this was the case and suggests that the manuscript provided a combination of textual and visual prompts for imaginative engagement. Here, Capodilista comments on the contemplative life chosen by the nuns and, having observed that they are unable to travel to Jerusalem in person, suggests how his gift might be put to good use:

⁸² The Dome of the Rock had been renamed the Templum Domini following the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. For textual and visual representations of the site in Italy, see Blair Moore, 'Textual Transmission and Pictorial Transformations'.

⁸³ Pnina Arad, 'As If You Were There: The Cultural Impact of Two Pilgrims' Maps of the Holy Land' in Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai and Hanna Vorholt eds., *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 307-17. I am grateful to Dr Arad for sharing her research with me.

[...] non possendo voy forsi pervenire al personal vedere e
 cognoscimento di tanto fruto, mi ha parso di tal devotissima visitatione
 per me facta in tuto quello che el tenue mio ingienio habia potuto
 intendere, cognoscere et vedere, farne partecipe le vostre reverende
 carità, acyò che udendo commemorare particolarmente come si fa sì de
 lo viaggio come de quello sanctissimo loco, possate tal commemoratione
 attribuir a la personal visitatione, consequendo per questa fructo
 inextimabile.⁸⁴

The letter continues by highlighting the fact that the sites of both plenary and minor indulgences have been marked with decorative crosses, a common practice in texts used for virtual pilgrimage.⁸⁵ The suggestion that the account will be heard ('udendo') implies an oral context and corresponds with established notions of virtual pilgrimage as a corporate activity that took place in shared conventual space under close supervision.⁸⁶

Several aspects of the text itself further confirm the anticipated use of *Itinerario* as a devotional aid. The inclusion of psalms, prayers and antiphonies was by no means commonplace in pilgrimage accounts of this period, and the repeated introduction of these with 'dirai' and 'adorerai' implies that they were intended to be read aloud. An emphasis on the accurate description of churches and chapels is also clearly discernible, with precise dimensions given for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Templum Domini, the latter copied from the *Book*.⁸⁷ Accurate physical description was important for practitioners of virtual pilgrimage, who would often pace out the dimensions of the holy sites and in some instances constructed

⁸⁴ Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 164.

⁸⁵ Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 164: 'dove nel presente libro si troverà signata nel margine la croce d'oro, in quello locho se intende esser indulgentia plenaria, et dove sera signata la croce rossa li sio manifesta esser minor indulgentia'. Rudy notes a similar practice in Paris, Bibliothèque de L'Arsenal Ms. 212; see 'A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage', p. 511.

⁸⁶ Beebe, 'Reading Mental Pilgrimage', p. 51.

⁸⁷ John Mandeville, *Tractato de le piu maravegliose cosse* (Milan, 1480), cc6^{r-v}: 'Sapiati che questo non è il tempio che fece Salamone... Questo tempio è una nobile casa tutta rotonda et è larga cubiti .lxiiii. e altrettanto longa e alta cubiti centoquarantasei et è coperta de piombo et ha intorno pillastri de marmoro'. Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 189-90: 'Sapiate anchora che questo non è il templo che fece fare Salamone... Questo sanctissimo templo largo cubito lxiiii è altrettanto longo et è alto cubiti cxlvi; intorno gli sono pillastri di marmi'.

scale models as an aid to imaginative engagement with sacred architectural space.⁸⁸ That Gabriele was aware of this is shown both by his statement that he is certain readers will wish to be told of the physical appearance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and by the regular comparison between the churches of Jerusalem and those of Padua, with which the nuns of San Bernardino would have been well acquainted.⁸⁹

The *Itinerario*, particularly in the form in which it was first presented to the Abbess of San Bernardino, is distinctively coloured by spiritual concerns that blur the boundaries between pilgrimage account and devotional aid. Capodilista's selective approach to Mandeville as a source suggests that he considered accurate description of the Holy Land and its history to be of paramount importance in producing a version of his account intended specifically for use as a devotional tool. Having observed how a scholarly reader approached and appropriated the *Book*, this chapter will now explore similar engagement by a group of late fifteenth-century Tuscan priests, who use the Book – both knowingly and unwittingly – to commemorate their own experience of Jerusalem and to allow others to engage imaginatively with pilgrimage.

Michele da Figline and Zanobi del Lavacchio: remembering the Florentine pilgrimage of 1489

By the late fifteenth century, an interest in the world beyond Europe permeated all levels of Florentine society. Humanist engagement with geography, already notable in Petrarch and Boccaccio, increased significantly with the translation of Ptolemy's *Geographia* into Latin in 1406. Such interests also began to take hold in Florentine vernacular culture, as is indicated by Francesco Berlinghieri's vernacular verse reworking of the text printed in 1482 and the engagement of artists, merchants and intellectuals, from Paolo Toscanelli to Antonio Manetti. From mid-century, Florence had also sought to enhance her mercantile position in the eastern Mediterranean, sending galleys every year to Constantinople and making diplomatic overtures to the

⁸⁸ See in particular Deborah Howard, 'Venice as Gateway to the Holy Land: Pilgrims as Agents of Transmission' in *Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000-1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, ed. by Paul Davies, Deborah Howard and Wendy Pullan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 87-112.

⁸⁹ Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 209: 'Et perchè quegli che legerano questo divoto peregrinazo ragionevolmente desidererano intender la forma de chesia, et anche del Sanctissimo Sepulcro, quanto più chiaro io poterò lo descriverò'.

Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo. Pilgrimage remained an important concern for both religious and lay Florentines during this period, yet for the latter it was often integrated with other modes of interaction with the eastern world. The 1498 pilgrimage of Bernardo Michelozzi and Bonsignore Bonsignori, the former a pupil of Marsilio Ficino, was an extension of a book-finding expedition to Constantinople and the Levant.⁹⁰ Evidence of cross-pollination between pilgrimage and humanist interests can also be clearly observed in Berlinghieri's integration of material from Marino Sanudo pertaining to Jerusalem into his version of the *Geographia*.⁹¹ The *Book's* appeal in this context is demonstrated by its publication in 1492 by Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri. Printers mainly of vernacular religious texts, including a number of Savonarola's treatises, the pair diversified their output to include a number of popular works that touched on both pilgrimage and matters of geography, including Giuliano Dati's *Stazione ed indulgenze di Roma* (c.1405) and the same author's *Lettera delle isole nuovamente trovate* (1493), a verse translation of Columbus' letter describing his first voyage.

The intersection of pilgrimage with Florence's interest in the wider world, and the continued influence of the *Book*, can be seen in the case of the Florentine embassy to Cairo of 1488.⁹² Diplomatic interaction with the Sultanate throughout the 1480s had signalled the possibility of commercial expansion in Egypt. In 1487 Sultan Qa' it-Bāy sent his ambassador Ibn-Mahfuz (known as Malfot) to Florence. Malfot's arrival provoked a considerable stir not least due to the giraffe he brought as a gift for Lorenzo de' Medici, who was himself more interested by the promise of Egyptian trade privileges equal to those enjoyed by the Venetians. The opportunity to make ground on a commercial rival was not missed, and, in October of the following year, a group of Florentines headed by the ambassador Luigi della Stufa set out for Naples, from where they sailed to Egypt. In addition to a number of official letters sent to Lorenzo de' Medici, the journey is recorded in a brief account written by Della Stufa's chaplain, Zanobi del Lavacchio, which survives in a single copy now held in the state archives of Florence.⁹³ Following six months of protracted negotiations that failed to

⁹⁰ See Eva Borsook, 'The Travels of Bernardo Michelozzi and Bonsignore Bonsignori in the Levant (1497-98)', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973), 145-97.

⁹¹ Sean Roberts, *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople and the Renaissance of Geography* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 136-37.

⁹² For a detailed description of the embassy, see Claudia Tripodi, 'Viaggi di ambasciatori fra Firenze e Il Cairo nel XV secolo', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 122, 2 (2010), 411-40.

⁹³ The document in question is Florence, Archivio di Stato, Guicciardini-Corsi-Salviati, Carte di Luigi

yield significant results, Zanobi and a number of the Florentines left Della Stufa in order to undertake a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai and Jerusalem. A second, more detailed account of this journey, also held in the Riccardiana, was initially attributed to Zanobi, but subsequent scholarship has demonstrated that it was in fact produced by another Tuscan priest, Michele da Figline, who in the spring of 1489 had sailed from Venice to Alexandria with an unnamed companion before making a rendezvous with the embassy in Cairo.⁹⁴

In contrast to many secular Florentine pilgrims of this time who appear to have been more interested in the customs and peoples of the Levant than the spiritual aspect of their journey, Michele's account is fundamentally religious in character. Indeed, he draws a contrast between 'veri pellegrini' such as himself and a Florentine passenger travelling to Cairo on diplomatic business, remarking that it would have been better for him to return home.⁹⁵ As in Capodilista's *Itinerario*, an account of the journey to and from Jerusalem bookends a systematic list of the holy sites and their indulgences, accompanied by corresponding prayers and antiphons. This similarity between the two accounts is no coincidence; a close examination of the text reveals that much of Michele's material is derived from the *Viaggio in Terra Santa* of Santo Brasca. Published in Milan in 1481, Brasca's account draws extensively on Capodilista's *Itinerario*, often copying lengthy passages verbatim.⁹⁶ Michele does not appear to have shared Brasca's predilection for wholesale transcription: he often reworks source material into his own itinerary, although in many instances descriptions of sites and corresponding devotional liturgy have clearly been appropriated from the *Viaggio*. An example of this is the passage concerning the Templum Domini, which includes Brasca's observation that the site is inaccessible to

della Stufa, 19. For the edited text see Gino Corti, 'Relazione di un viaggio al Soldano d'Egitto e in Terra Santa', *Archivio storico italiano* 116 (1958), 247-66.

⁹⁴ Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1923. The text has recently been edited in Marina Montesano, *Da Figline a Gerusalemme: Viaggio del prete Michele in Egitto e in Terrasanta (1489-1490)* (Rome: Viella, 2010). Corti's interpretation of the second account as a redraft of the first presumably stems from a shared itinerary and an identical passage describing Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity.

⁹⁵ Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 51. This curious reference to a Florentine priest travelling in secular guise to pay tribute to the Sultan immediately calls to mind the figure of Zanobi, who had done exactly this (although travelling from Messina rather than Venice). The similarity may be coincidental, but it is also possible that Michele harboured doubts as to his companion's motivation.

⁹⁶ That Michele referred to Brasca's account, rather than that of Capodilista, is demonstrated by his inclusion of a number of Brasca's embellishments to Capodilista's text (such as a reference to the Pantheon in Rome; see Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 265) and an absence of material from Capodilista also left out by Brasca (e.g. a digression on the location of the Holy Prepuce; see Lepschy, ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 189). In addition, a number of Brasca's transcription errors also appear in Michele's account.

pilgrims but can be viewed from the Mount of Olives, as well as a large amount of other material originally copied from Mandeville by Capodilista.⁹⁷ Similar instances can be observed towards the end of the account, where Michele lists a number of pilgrimage sites outside Jerusalem that he was unable to visit due to the presence of brigands in the surrounding countryside. Eager to avoid taking undue credit, he highlights the fact that such pilgrimages were listed on a map at the Franciscan monastery of Mount Zion and that he will only enumerate corresponding indulgences and prayers. Fuller descriptions are nonetheless given for important sites and are often identical to those of the *Viaggio*.⁹⁸ What emerges is a complex pattern of borrowings and rewritings from previous accounts that stretches from Mandeville, via Capodilista and Brasca, to Michele.⁹⁹

Unlike Brasca, who gives no indication of his dependence on Capodilista's *Itinerario*, Michele seems prepared to acknowledge the fact that his account is not based solely on first-person observation. In addition to the reference to the map at Mount Zion, a number of textual features indicate a willingness to allow his readers to recognize the extent of his use of material from previous accounts. Instances of specific borrowing from Brasca are often prefaced by phrases that distance Michele from the text, as in the case of the Templum Domini where the dimensions are preceded by the caveat 'secondo ò inteso'.¹⁰⁰ The phrase 'dicono che' and variations thereof appear regularly in descriptions of holy sites and consistently introduce material that is found in similar form in Brasca's *Viaggio*, such as the miracle of the

⁹⁷ Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 75-77: 'Sapiate anchora che questo non è quello templo che fece fare Salamone... In questo templo non pò intrare christiano alcuno et pegio giudei, perché intrando bisogna rìa o morire o renegare la fede. Pur da monte Oliveto si po' vedere di fuoravia chiaramente... La copertura ha una sola cuba, grande, de piombo, molto ben lavorata. Questo sanctissimo templo secondo m'è refferto per quelli che l'hano misurato è largo cubiti 64 et altri tanti longo et è alto cubiti 166 intorno gli sono pillastri di marmo'. Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 109: 'Sappi che questo tempio non è il vero tempio di Salamone... In questo tempio, né in nessuno tempio di mori non possono entrare né cristiani né Gidej perché entrando bisognerebbe o rineghare o morire; ma d'in sul Monte Orivieto si vede bene di fuori ella ... la sua sommità si e aguza con uno andito a colonnelli et tutto coperto di piombo et, secondo ò inteso, è alto braccia 166 et largho braccia 64 et altrettanto lungho'.

⁹⁸ Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 130-33. For example, the Dead Sea (p. 131): 'Et di poi el Mare Morto, dove furono summerse quelle cinque ciptà cioè Sodoma, Ghomorra, Adama, Sabolin et Seghor, che fu la quinta per preghio di Lotto, nipote d'Abram, fu preservata et al presente si chiama Castello delle Palme'. Lepschy ed., *Viaggio in Terra Santa*, p. 113: 'In questo mare abissò et profundò le quarto misere citade per lo maledicto peccato de la sodomia, cioè Sodoma, Gomorra, Adama et Sobolin, et apparenno anchora li vestigij dove erano situate. Segor che fu la quinta, a prece de Loth nepote de Abraam fu preservata, et chiamasi al presente Castello de le Palme.'

⁹⁹ It is notable that the first edition of Brasca's account, published in Milan in 1481, included a crude woodcut figure of the Holy Sepulchre showing its form from the side.

¹⁰⁰ Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 109.

Holy Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the detail of the transportation of the body of Saint Jerome to Rome. Whilst Michele acknowledges that his readers might easily access accurate information regarding the Holy Land elsewhere, he plainly shares Capodilista's concern with providing a complete account, at one point stating his desire to give a comprehensive list of pilgrimage sites.

As with Capodilista, Michele's exhaustiveness is related to a concern with the readers of his account and their approach to the text. References to the reader regularly punctuate the text, creating a sense of itinerary as the journey around Jerusalem is described. This interaction between narrator and audience reaches its pinnacle with the description of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, introduced with an address to the reader that clearly defines Michele's intention for his account to be put to imaginative devotional use:

Intendi bene lectore che leggierai queste cose, bisogna considerare quello che io ti descrivo. Qui ti dico di mano in mano dove sono, overo dove furono questi misterii, sì che attendi bene colla mente che, se tu lo considerrai bene, ti parrà essere ne proprii luoghi.¹⁰¹

The description of Calvary is preceded by a further explanation that clearly defines the spiritual benefits that the imaginary pilgrim will receive. Much like Capodilista in his letter to the abbess of San Bernardino, Michele sets out the relationship between his physical journey to Jerusalem and the virtual pilgrimage that the reader will undertake. Here, as before, the call for the reader to be attentive with their mind serves to underline the account's role as a model for imaginative engagement:

Sta attenta colla mente et io m'ingegnerò iusta mia possa descriverti et darti ad intendere come sta et come è facte questa chiesa [...] Et così, di mano in mano, verrò descrivendo tutti e' luoghi et come stanno il meglio che potrò, acciò che tu, leggendo, t'innamori di Yhesu Christo et di visitarli, se non corporalmente, spiritualmente almancho.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 92.

¹⁰² Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 94-95.

A similar emphasis on accurate physical description can be found elsewhere in passages concerning the Templum Domini and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where the inclusion of precise dimensions suggests that Michele wished his readers to engage imaginatively with sacred architectural space. Although the account concludes with a summary list of expenses and practical advice for those who might wish to travel to Jerusalem themselves, it was evidently intended primarily for devotional use. Michele's repeated direct address to the reader may have been intended to underline the passing of information from a real pilgrim to readers who would have reimagined the sites in their mind's eye, but it also echoes the relationship between pilgrim authors like Michele and Capodilista and the earlier accounts that they read and engaged with themselves.

Michele's account lacks any precise dedication, and it is therefore difficult to identify with certainty its intended readership. A Franciscan convent had existed in Figline from the end of the thirteenth century and one might speculate that such a group of readers would fit with the established pattern of virtual pilgrimage practice, although pending further findings such a conclusion remains purely conjectural. Little is known of Michele beyond the details left in the Riccardiana manuscript, although the presence of identical material in Zanobi's account suggests that the two priests remained in contact following their return to Tuscany. Although it is difficult to accurately date either text, the fact that the matching passages conform broadly with Michele's written style suggests that Zanobi may have copied from his friend's more detailed account: the Florentine certainly displays little of Michele's literary erudition, providing for the most part a generic list of the holy places. Nevertheless, Zanobi appears like Michele to have engaged with other pilgrimage accounts in order to remember the time he spent in Jerusalem. An early sixteenth-century Florentine printed edition of the *Book of John Mandeville*, also in the Riccardiana, contains a long inscription on a flyleaf in Zanobi's hand, recording his journey to Cairo and pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with specific mention made of his companions and the date and time of his entry into the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁰³ That Zanobi saw fit to record such details in a copy of the *Book* many years after his return to Florence suggests that he

¹⁰³ The copy in question is Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana Ed. Rari 271. Zanobi names a third pilgrim in his account, Clemente da Montevarchi. Clemente was presumably Michele's unnamed companion, since the two tearfully parted ways at Montevarchi before Michele returned to Figline. See Montesano ed., *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, pp. 162-63.

too was aware of the value of written accounts as an aid to mental engagement with pilgrimage.

Conclusion

Though they were written in very different contexts, the accounts of Gabriele Capodilista and Michele da Figline clearly demonstrate the complex relationship between written records of pilgrimage and devotional practice in fifteenth-century Italy. Like their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, the Paduan nobleman and the Tuscan priest shared a belief in the spiritual value of communicating their experiences of Jerusalem with those unable to undertake a pilgrimage in person. Their critical engagement with the *Book* not only reveals much about the importance they placed on providing a complete description of the Holy Land, but also demonstrates that they considered the text an authoritative and relevant source. As the journey to Jerusalem became progressively more difficult in the sixteenth century, the concept of pilgrimage remained important. As F. Thomas Noonan notes, ‘actual pilgrimage had become the rarest of acts, but those rare acts of pilgrimage sufficed to provoke into existence an entire literature of pilgrimage that flourished in the new medium of print’.¹⁰⁴ Although the *Book* remained the most printed vernacular pilgrimage account in Italy until it was displaced by the anonymous *Viaggio da Venetia al Santo Sepulchro*, first published in Venice in 1518, Italian printers increasingly represented Sir John as an intrepid explorer rather than a devout pilgrim.¹⁰⁵ As this chapter has discussed, while manuscript and printed copies of the *Book* produced in the sixteenth century continue to display evidence of readerly engagement with the theme of pilgrimage, it is clear that readers were gradually becoming less interested in this aspect of the text. This decline is paralleled by the emergence of new and innovative forms of pilgrimage writing in this period, with illustrated guides, such as the famous *Viaggio da Venetia*, becoming increasingly popular. Later, the post-Tridentine revival of pilgrimage in response to Protestantism brought about a flourishing of popular

¹⁰⁴ F. Thomas Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007), p. 243.

¹⁰⁵ Kathryn Blair Moore has convincingly demonstrated that the *Viaggio da Venetia* was based on Niccolò da Poggibonsi’s fourteenth century *Libro d’Oltramare*; see her ‘The Disappearance of an Author and the Emergence of a Genre: Niccolò da Poggibonsi and Pilgrimage Guidebooks Between Manuscript and Print’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, 2 (2013), 357-411.

pilgrimage compilations – such as Luigi Vulcano’s *Vera et nuova descrizione di Terra Santa* (1563), ‘compilata da verissimi autori’ – in which references to Mandeville are conspicuously absent. It seems that Sir John was numbered among those pilgrims dismissed by the character of Carlo Gonzaga in Ludovico Arrivabene’s *Dialogo delle cose piu illustri di Terra Santa* (1592) as ‘vecchi et rozzi, per non dir vani, sì che tolgono a’ loro autori fede [...] et su le quali non potete fermar la vostra credenza’.¹⁰⁶ All the same, in spite of such later estimates, the text’s longevity and influence on the production of pilgrimage literature demonstrate that it deserves to be ranked among the most important pilgrimage accounts of the Italian Renaissance.

¹⁰⁶ Ludovico Arrivabene, *Dialogo delle cose piu illustri di Terra Santa* (Verona: Marc’Antonio Palazzolo, 1592), p. 15. These are contrasted with more recent and trustworthy pilgrim authors, such as Noè Bianco (‘testimone grave’) and Jean Zuallart (‘[che] esce di schiera’).

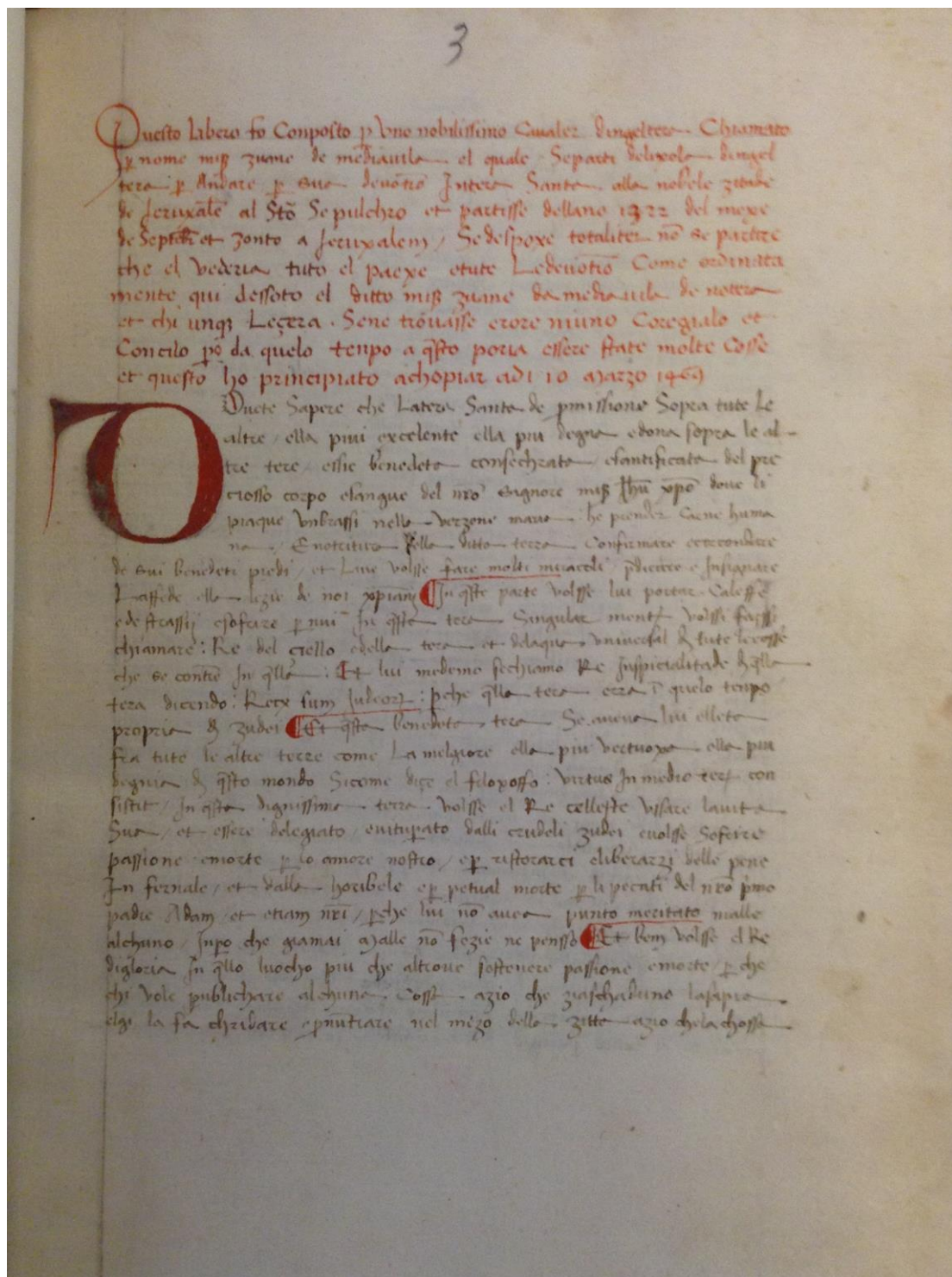


Figure 2: London, British Library MS Add. 41329 (LBL), Italian version of *The Book of John Mandeville*, fol. 1^r.



Figure 3: Illustration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from the autograph manuscript of Gabriele Capodilista's *Itinerario* (fol. 81^v). Image after Kenneth Nebenzhal, *Maps of the Holy Land: Images of Terra Sancta Through Two Millenia* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), plate 18.

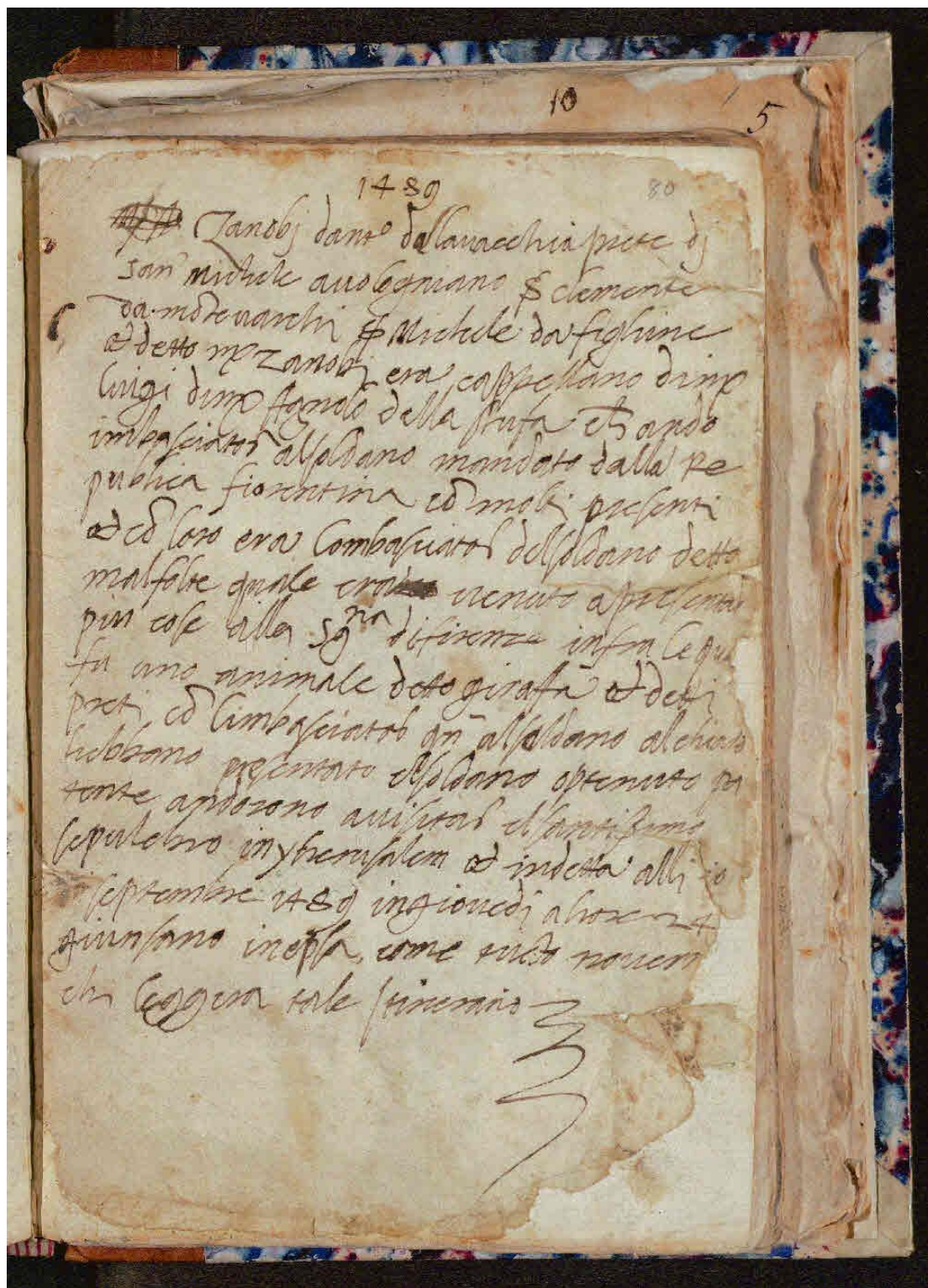


Figure 4: Zanobi del Lavacchio's inscription in his copy of the *Book of John Mandeville* (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana Ed. Rari 271, verso of back fly leaf).

Chapter 3: Travel Writing and Romance Epic

In her study of European travel writing of the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, Mary Baine Campbell states that ‘with *Mandeville’s Travels*, the developing genre of travel literature in the West reached a complicated and long-sustained climax.’¹

Marco Polo may remain the medieval travel writer *par excellence* both for scholars and the general public, yet the last sixty years have seen the dispelling of nineteenth-century moralistic sentiments regarding the veracity of Mandeville’s account and an increasing appreciation of the text’s literary impact. An accomplished work of prose fiction – even if this was unrecognized by the vast majority of its early readers – it was to have a profound and lasting impact on European literature.

Written in the mid-fourteenth century at a time when Europe’s knowledge of the wider world was dramatically changing, the *Book* is positioned at a crossroads in the history of travel writing. Jaś Elsner and Joan Pau Rubiés have described the text as ‘both a conservative attempt to reinstate a past vision in a period of doubt and a concession to the new authority of the traveller as direct observer’.² Mandeville offers the reader both a devout pilgrimage account and an exploration of cultural diversity; he refers to established textual authorities but also moulds a credible first-person narrator to relay ‘eyewitness’ observations. It is little wonder, then, that the *Book* appealed to authors of both established ‘medieval’ genres and to those interested in new ways of imagining the world, inspiring *Tirant lo Blanc* and the romances of the Gawain poet as well as Rabelais’ *Pantagruel* and More’s *Utopia*.³

This chapter seeks to examine the impact of the *Book* on the production of fictional literature in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with a specific focus on romance epic. It commences with an overview of the *Book*’s influence on a variety of fictional genres, exploring how a growing interest in the travel account as a literary form led authors to engage with the text in strikingly different ways. It will then observe how an interest in romance themes is reflected in the circulation of the French Continental and Italian versions of the text, particularly in a courtly context,

¹ Mary B. Campbell, ‘The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 1400-1600’ (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 122.

² Jaś Elsner and Joan Pau Rubiés, ‘Introduction’ in Jaś Elsner and Joan Pau Rubiés eds., *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (Reaktion: London, 1999), p. 39.

³ Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 166-74.

before turning to the *Book*'s influence on the writing of romance epic in Florence and Ferrara. Through a series of individual case studies, it will then demonstrate how an interest in the role of travel within this genre prompted the authors of Italy's most celebrated romance epics, as well as their less distinguished peers, to imitate the *Book*.

Travel writing and Italian fiction

In the urban centres of northern and central Italy, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a flourishing of the production of fictional literature. Such a category is of course problematic in nature, since distinctions between 'history' and 'fiction' were less than well defined than today (although even now they arguably remain fraught and complex). The fundamental importance of textual authority meant that works that engaged with established literary and cultural traditions were widely accepted as authoritative; imitation of the classical and biblical traditions, in particular, endowed texts with *auctoritas*.⁴ Similarly, the literary functions of *utile* (instruction) and *diletto* (entertainment) were recognized as distinct but intrinsically related, following the model established in Horace's *Ars poetica*.⁵ This period also saw fundamental changes in the ways in which creative literary production was construed. Through its use of a meta-narrative frame, Boccaccio's hugely influential *Decameron* encouraged readers to consider the fictive nature of storytelling and prompted an explosion in the production of similar *libri di novelle*, as well as influencing a wide variety of pre-existing prose and verse narrative forms.⁶ The advent of print culture in the mid fifteenth century would further increase the variety of self-consciously fictitious genres in both the vernacular and Latin, from dialogues to dramas. Although the *Book* is presented (and was largely accepted) as a factual account, it too can be understood within this context of literary development, both as

⁴ See Suzanne Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages', *History and Theory* 22, 3 (1983), 278-310.

⁵ Boccaccio influentially commented on Horace's distinction in the proem and epilogue of the *Decameron*.

⁶ See Jon R. Snyder, 'Prose' in Michael Wyatt ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 202-23; Robert Hollander, 'Utilità in Boccaccio's *Decameron*', *Studi sul Boccaccio* 15 (1985), 215-33.

a fictional work that sought to imitate the accounts of genuine travellers and as an important marker in the development of travel writing as a distinct genre. This section will explore its influence across a range of fictional literary works, focusing in particular on the approaches of different authors to the motif of travel.

Interaction with the *Book* in a Florentine context can be observed as early as the second decade of the fifteenth century in a remarkable fictional travel narrative. The *Libro piccolo di meraviglie* (c. 1416) (as it has been titled by its modern editor, Marziano Guglielminetti) purports to describe the journey of one Jacopo da Sanseverino and his three companions, ‘ch’andorono cercando gran parte del mondo’.⁷ Much like the *Book*, the true identity of the author of the *Libro piccolo* is unknown, but it is clear that the journey it describes is based largely on existing works: from the *Letter of Prester John* and the contemporary prose romance *Il Guerrin meschino* to the travel accounts of Marco Polo, Odoric of Pordenone and, above all, Mandeville. Whilst the possibility that Jacopo was a genuine traveller cannot be excluded, it seems prudent to follow Guglielminetti’s example of considering the text as a ‘rappresentazione di se stesso e delle sue reazioni nella pagina letteraria’.⁸

The itinerary of the *Libro piccolo* takes in many of the typical locations of exotic travel writing. Departing from Venice, Jacopo and his companions travel first by sea to the Holy Land. A cursory description of Jerusalem and Mount Sinai draws on Mandeville, but it is clear that Jacopo’s true interests lie further afield. Passing through Cairo, the travellers join a caravan bound for the kingdom of Prester John (here located in Africa), before pressing on through India and the islands of the Indian Ocean. Following a lengthy description of the Mongol Empire and its tributaries, the account describes the return journey via the Middle East and North Africa to Europe. Here, Jacopo narrates natural marvels observed in Ireland and Portugal, whilst also claiming to have witnessed miracles in London and Prague, the latter in the company of Emperor Sigismund following the council of Constance. Although this European

⁷ Jacopo da Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo di meraviglie*, ed. by Marziano Guglielminetti (Milan: Serra e Riva, 1985), p. 69. The text survives in three known manuscripts: Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana MS Palatino 115 (Tuscany, fifteenth century); New Haven, Connecticut, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library MS 928 (Venice?, fifteenth century); and Rome, BAV MS Barberino Latino 4048 (late fifteenth century). The latter is distinguished from its predecessors by a number of additions that emphasize Jacopo’s authority as an eyewitness reporter.

⁸ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 21.

digression is atypical of Jacopo's textual models, its inclusion is linked specifically to his interests, as we will later explore.

The *Libro* mimics the formal *topoi* of travel writing in a number of ways. Like the accounts of Mandeville and Polo, Jacopo gives a specific date for his departure (1 May 1416), adding that of his arrival at the court of Prester John and stating his presence in Bohemia 'poco tempo inanzi si creasse papa Martino'.⁹ Alongside these temporal indicators, the account is further grounded in reality by Jacopo's prominent position both as narrator and as a figure within the narrative, where his eyewitness status is underlined at key junctures. When Jacopo meets the king of Persia (in an episode that closely mirrors Sir John's conversation with the Sultan of Babylon), he identifies himself specifically as 'me messer Jacopo da Sansoverino'. Elsewhere, references to marvels are regularly prefaced by a reminder of Jacopo's personal presence. There is also a discernibly empirical tone to descriptions of travel: the distance between cities is specified in number of days, toponyms and rulers are assigned to each country and there are frequent references to long-distance trade. Although the imitation of genuine accounts might suggest a concern with verisimilitude, marvelous elements are emphasized throughout the text, sometimes to the point of caricature. The centrality of *mirabilia* to the *Libro*'s rationale is made clear throughout the account: from the opening declaration of the purpose of the journey, to the description of the Mongol Empire where 'avavàno gran piacere di veder cose strane per ridirlo di qua', and the conclusion of the text, where Jacopo neglects to give any report of Italy or France 'perché sono noti a tutta gente'.¹⁰ While Jacopo visits Jerusalem, recollection of his pilgrimage is limited to a single sentence, quickly giving way to a description of the Sandy Sea.¹¹ The lands of Prester John are populated not only by giants, pygmies and cynocephali – the standard monstrous races of eastern lore – but by seemingly original creations: horses naturally coloured blue, green, red and yellow, and 'tinboli', animals that are half-lion and half-cow.¹²

Indeed, at times Jacopo appears actively determined to surpass the *mirabilia* reported in his sources. Guglielminetti observes a tendency to 'straniare materiali di

⁹ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 121.

¹⁰ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 93; p. 132.

¹¹ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 70: 'Andamo in Gerusalemme, e vicitamo tutti quelli santi lati, come più chiaramente ancora vi contero'. The promised further detail is limited to two cursory sentences listing some of the holy sites that appear, seemingly as an afterthought, immediately prior to the conclusion of the text.

¹² Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 77.

codici più alti: nel duplice senso di raccontare cose strane, e di allontanarle dal loro contesto, rendendole strane'.¹³ One example of this deliberate defamiliarization of source material is the description of the tower of Babel, identified (following Mandeville's misnomer) as 'la torre di Babilonia'. In the *Book*, Mandeville gives a cursory description of the tower, justified by the fact that no traveller dares approach due to the presence of large snakes and other poisonous animals. Jacopo appears to read this as an opportunity for one-upmanship, describing how his companions set fires in order to scare the snakes away. The passage is a direct echo of the description of pygmies who set light to fields of pepper trees in order to safely harvest it, commonly reported in accounts of the East but interestingly refuted in the *Book*. Approaching the tower, Jacopo states, he and his companions smeared themselves with garlic in order to protect themselves from any remaining poison – a quite deliberate reworking of Mandeville's explanation of the reality behind the story of the pygmies, who he states rub themselves with lemon juice in order to protect themselves without damaging the trees. Having rewritten his source, Jacopo is now able to outdo Sir John with ease: 'ora entramo nella detta torre, e guardamola, e misuramola a nostro modo'.¹⁴

This technique of defamiliarization raises an important question about the *Libro piccolo*: did Jacopo intend to create a believable fiction that would pass for a genuine travel account, or is his work rather a pastiche – or even a parody – of the genre? There are several indications that Jacopo did not intend his work to be taken entirely seriously. Both Marianne O'Doherty and Giorgio Cardona draw attention to Jacopo's use of invented toponyms alongside the names of real locations, many of which carry subtle allusions: from the cities of Verdiletto ('true delight') and Gioia ('joy') in the kingdom of Prester John, to Filisteo ('Philistine') and Campofavano ('pleasant field').¹⁵ In some instances the underlying meaning is so strong that it cannot be ignored. The province of Pensaremelo clearly infers invention, whilst with a humorous touch the kingdom of Inetto is reportedly named after a former ruler. Similarly striking is the North African city of Fessa, a term which by the fifteenth-

¹³ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 111.

¹⁵ Giorgio Cardona, 'I viaggi e le scoperte' in Alberto Asor Rosa ed., *Letteratura italiana Vol. 5, Le questioni* (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), p. 691; Marianne O'Doherty, 'Eyewitness Accounts of "the Indies" in the Later Medieval West: Reading, Reception and Re-use (c. 1300-1500)', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds, 2006, p. 247.

century had acquired both a general implication of stupidity alongside a more vulgar anatomical connotation.¹⁶ Perhaps the most telling example of all is the island of Menitra, a close semi-homophone of *mentira*. Jacopo's use of the island as the setting for his version of the cannibalistic euthanasia reported by Odoric and Mandeville on the island of Dondina could be interpreted as a reflection of his own opinion of the tale's plausibility. However, in the majority of instances these connotative toponyms appear less to satirize the travel account genre than to draw the attention of the reader to the fictive nature of the text.

A further element of the *Libro piccolo* that complicates any notion of the text as a straightforward imitation travel account is the inclusion of two Genoese characters: a dragoman at the court of Prester John named Carlo Grimaldi and an interpreter, Adorio Doria. The family names, which correspond to two prominent Genoese houses, represent a connection with the real world that is completely absent in Jacopo's three unnamed companions. Grimaldi encounters Jacopo when he interrupts a conversation between the protagonist and Prester John, asking for news of the ongoing war between France and England (the Hundred Years' War). Although the conversation acts as a prompt to discuss the might of Prester John in comparison to his European counterparts, the identification of the dragoman is no accident: the Genoese played an important role in the war on the side of the French, and particularly at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 where the French vanguard had been led by a Genoese contingent under Carlo Grimaldi and Antonio Doria. The role of the Genoese was reported in Florentine texts including Giovanni Villani's *Nuova cronica*, and it is surely no coincidence that Jacopo includes the names here. Doria is mentioned when Jacopo, finding himself at the court of Istrioco (a fictional son of Timur), asks for 'novelle di Ponente e di corte di Roma e del re di Francia e degl'altri re'.¹⁷ This reminder of the discord of Christendom functions as a preface to a description of Istrioco's considerable power.

As with the toponyms, identifying Jacopo's intentions here is a problematic task. Whilst it is tempting to read a degree of rivalry on the part of a Tuscan author, neither the dragoman nor the interpreter is painted in a particularly negative light. Any verisimilitude conveyed by the representation of the presence of Genoese

¹⁶ Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* vol. 5 (Turin: UTET, 1968), p. 877-8.

¹⁷ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 102.

characters in an overseas context is undermined by the conspicuous nature of their inclusion and other regular reminders of the text's fictitious nature. The passage can, however, be understood as contributing to a broader discussion of Latin disunity throughout the *Libro*, which comes to the fore in the description of Europe towards the end of the text. Here, Jacopo claims to have witnessed a miracle performed in Bohemia by the Cardinal of Lodi, which converts many heretical Hussites back to the Catholic faith. In the following passage, Antipope Benedict's refusal to submit to the Council of Constance is contrasted with Emperor Sigismund's will to 'fare un altro bene, cioè di mettere pacie tra la Francia e l'Inghiltera'.¹⁸ Jacopo also reports another miracle that results in the baptism of several heretics by the Emperor himself. In this context, the Doria and Grimaldi names take on a further significance: the former was historically a Ghibelline family and the latter Guelph, a fact that would not have been lost on Jacopo's contemporaries. Although their inclusion is a reminder of historical discord, it is part of a more general engagement with the theme of Christian discord that concludes with a tantalizing glimpse of a united Christendom, where political and religious differences are resolved. The *Libro* is in many ways a challenging text of 'problematic, ambivalent status', and it is unclear whether its author ever intended for it to be circulated among other readers.¹⁹ However, it indicates a clear interest in Mandeville as a literary model in the early fifteenth century, revealing an awareness of the typical *topoi* of travel accounts and the possibility of using these as a means to explore other agendas.

Evidence of the *Book*'s influence on a very different, yet no less inventive, imitation of travel writing can be found in the notes of Leonardo da Vinci. The Tuscan polymath's interest in the eastern world and his cartographical erudition are well known. Leonardo's familiarity with the *Book* is evidenced by its inclusion under the title *Giovan de Mandevilla* in a list of works in his possession prior to his departure from Milan for France in 1499.²⁰ That he read and digested the *Book* is demonstrated by notes in a number of his manuscripts referring to details from the text: he appears to have been particularly interested in eastern culture, noting the

¹⁸ Sanseverino, *Libro piccolo*, p. 124.

¹⁹ O'Doherty, 'Eyewitness Accounts of "the Indies"', pp. 249-50.

²⁰ See Irma A. Richter ed., *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 336. Leonardo may have owned a copy of Pietro da Corneto's *editio princeps*; he is thought to have possessed an edition of John Peckham's *Perspectiva communis* produced by the same printer around 1482. See Martin Kemp, *Lezioni dell'occhio: Leonardo da Vinci discepolo dell'esperienza* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 2004), p. 94.

Mongol practice of burning and eating idols and the regard for long fingernails.²¹ That Leonardo was interested in the form, as well as the contents, of travel accounts is indicated by a specific passage in the famous Codex Atlanticus, now conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. Written in epistolary form, it is presented as a report written to the Defterdar of Syria, lieutenant to the Sultan of Babylon, reporting on a mission to Armenia. Although this has prompted speculation that Leonardo may have travelled himself to the Levant, it is generally accepted that it is rather an attempt at imagined travel account. The bulk of the passage is taken up by a description of the structure and size of Mount Taurus, which has been convincingly demonstrated to draw on Mandeville's description of Mount Athos.²² Particular similarities are the description of the mountain's unparalleled height, its shadow, which reaches for a tremendous distance, and the fact that at the summit the air is dry and still.²³ Beyond this specific use of the *Book* as a model, several elements of the passage suggest a broader engagement on the part of Leonardo with the travel account genre. A series of notes marked as a 'divisione del libro' directly precedes the letter, suggesting that it may have been intended to form part of a broader fictional work. The description of a giant that follows that of Mount Taurus is accompanied by a variation of a verse from Antonio Pucci's *Historia della Reina d'Oriente*, on which it is clearly based. These elements are suggestive of a playful engagement with vernacular literature on the part of Leonardo as a prompt for fictional writing.

As Chapter 4 of this thesis explores, the popularizing tendencies of Italian printers of the *Book* often manifested themselves in strategies that emphasized the affinity of Sir John with contemporary explorers. Unlike the famous woodcuts produced for Anton Sorg's German edition of 1481 – which depict episodes from the text including the transformation of Hippocrates' daughter into a dragon, the fairy of the Castle of the Sparrowhawk and Sir John himself, who is portrayed as a young

²¹ The latter description is so clearly taken from the *Book* that Dietrich Seybold has termed it a 'Mandeville-Paraphrase'. See Dietrich Seybold, *Leonardo da Vinci im Orient: Geschichte eines europäischen Mythos* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag GmbH, 2011), p. 353.

²² Giorgio Castelfranco, *Studi vinciani* (Rome: De Luca, 1966), pp. 137-38, 148-49.

²³ Leonardo da Vinci, *Scritti letterari*, ed. Augusto Marinoni (Milan: Rizzoli, 1974), p. 125: 'L'ombra di questo giogo del Tauro è di tanta altura, che quando di mezzo giugno il sole è a mezzogiorno, la sua ombra s'astende insino al principio della Sarmazia che son giornate dodici [...] non passano mai e nuvoli [...] e non vi si sente soffiamenti di venti, ma nessuna cosa ci po' troppo vivere'. *TBJM*, p. 13: 'And there is another [mountain] that has the name Athos that is so high that its shadow reaches Lemnos, which is an island seventy-seven miles from the mountain. On the summit of these mountains the air is so pure that no wind or breeze blows, and therefore no bird or beast can live there'.

knight – the few illustrations that appear in Italian editions either reflect geographical interest or are so generic as to provide little opportunity for interpretation. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that the *Book* had a more subtle impact on the Italian print market, exerting an influence on the way in which other travel accounts were presented. Giovanni Battista Sessa printed the first edition of Marco Polo as *Delle maravigliose cose del mondo* (Venice, 1496), a title markedly similar to the *Trattato delle più maravegliose cose del mondo* used for the early editions of the *Book*.²⁴ This is the first time that Polo's account is known to have circulated under this title. By the middle of the sixteenth century, similar language can be found in the titles of a variety of similar texts: from *La declaratione delle citta famose de Italia, et de molte altre piu notabile del mondo* (Venice, 1546) to the *Avisi del'India de le stupend'e maravigliose cose che Nostro Signore Iesu Benedetto se degna mostrare* (Naples, 1554). When Matteo Pagano printed Polo in 1555, he marked it as *Marco Polo venetiano in cui si tratta le maravigliose cose del mondo per lui vedute: del costume di varii paesi, dello strano vivere di quelli, della descrizione de diversi animali [...] cosa nonmen utile che bella*.²⁵ Such terminology may have been associated with travel accounts prior to the advent of print, but the pre-eminent position of the *Book* at this important moment cemented its association with the blossoming genre.

Further evidence of the *Book*'s influence on the presentation of travel accounts can be found in the altogether different genre of utopian satire. The *ur*-work of this genre, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), has been proved to draw extensively on the *Book* for specific details, such as the inclusion of invented foreign alphabets, as well as the more generic use of travel through an alien society as a critical mirror.²⁶ In 1548, an Italian translation of More's work by Ortensio Lando was published in Venice by Anton Francesco Doni. Lando and Doni were part of a circle of popular writers, the *poligrafi*, whose sharp social satire brought them into increasing conflict with the religious establishment.²⁷ Their shared interest in utopian and anti-clerical

²⁴ Sessa himself printed the *Book* in 1504.

²⁵ This reference to both *utile* and *diletto*, which can also be observed in the title given to Italian editions of the *Book*, is particularly important since it underlines the marketing of travel writing as a form of entertainment.

²⁶ See C. W. R. D. Moseley, "'New Things to Speak Of': Money, Memory, and Mandeville's Travels in Early Modern England", *Yearbook of English Studies* 41, 1 (2011), 5-20, pp. 13-14; and Lochrie, *Nowhere in the Middle Ages*, pp. 180-216.

²⁷ See Paul Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World (1530-1560): Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando* (Madison, WI and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

themes suggests they would have been aware of the *Book*, which continued to be printed in Venice and was included by Doni in his 1550 catalogue of vernacular printed books, *La libreria del Doni fiorentino*.²⁸ Further evidence of Mandeville's influence in this circle can be found in Lando's *Commentario de le più notabile e mostruose cose d'Italia ed altri luoghi* (1553), written in parallel to his translation of *Utopia* and published in September of the same year.²⁹ Clearly inspired by More's work, the *Commentario* is an account of the travels of Messer Anonymo, a citizen of Utopia, whose wish to visit Italy is granted when a Florentine shipwrecked on the island offers to act as his personal guide. The result is a cutting satire of contemporary Italian culture that simultaneously displays Lando's extensive knowledge of the peninsula gained during his own travels. If, as Grendler states, 'More's *Utopia* had suggested to Lando the device of criticizing contemporary Italy through the impressions of a visitor from afar', the *Commentario* also demonstrates Lando's familiarity with exotic travel accounts and an awareness of the possibilities this genre presented for reflection on aspects of a more familiar society.³⁰

Allusions to the *topoi* of travel accounts appear throughout the *Commentario*. The most immediately obvious of these is the text's title, which echoes those of other odoeporic texts printed in Venice in this period, and the *Book* in particular. Anonymo's declaration of his motivation to 'osservare acciò che i miei cittadini habbino quella maggior cognitione che possibile lor sia delle cose italiane, senza solcar tanti mari et passar per tanti boschi' is similarly reminiscent of Sir John's expression of the rationale behind the *Book*'s composition in the exordium.³¹ Anonymo also repeatedly underlines the fact that in order not to bore the reader he will limit his observations to 'quel che mi parve trasordinario'.³² This emphasizing of the marvellous clearly aligns the *Commentario* with the genre of popular travel accounts, and constitutes an important element of Lando's critical mirror on Italian

²⁸ Doni's awareness of similar material is attested in an amusing letter to Girolamo Fava, published in his *Libreria* in 1550, where he refers to a fellow lodger by the nickname 'Prete Gianni'.

²⁹ 1553 edition reprinted as Ortensio Lando, *Commentario de le piu notabile e mostruose cose d'Italia ed altri luoghi, di lingua Aramea in Italian tradotto. Con un breve catalogo de gli inventori delle cose che si mangiano & beveno, novamente ritrovato* ed. Guido Salvatori and Paola Salvatori (Bologna: Pendragon, 1994).

³⁰ On this, see Piotr Salwa, 'L'esperienza del nuovo: la relazione di viaggio come strumento didascalico', *Annali d'italianistica* 21 (2003), 301-18.

³¹ Lando, *Commentario*, p. 3.

³² Lando, *Commentario*, p. 22.

society.³³ Throughout the text, everyday scenes are reported in the language of exotic *mirabilia*. In Rome, for example, Anonymo witnesses ‘uomini col capo di ferro, altri col capo di zucca e uomini vidi di pietra far versi e dialogi degni da esser piu di una fiata letti’, a jibe at the intellectuals of that city that recalls descriptions of monstrous races.³⁴ In Parma, he encounters ‘uomini c’hanno la bocca di barile’ and ‘sforzeschi, o sforzatori che li vogliamo dire’.³⁵ Such allusions vary from comical observations of individuals and social groups to more acute criticisms of injustice; Anonymo’s comments on the sale of slaves, which recall Mandeville’s reference to the slave markets of Cairo, are particularly poignant.³⁶

The *Commentario* also includes both realistic topographical descriptions and playful references to exotic locations. Anonymo states to have found the Earthly Paradise in Ferrara, but laments the absence of the saints who have declined to live there; the reference is in fact to the Palazzo Paradiso, constructed by Alfonso V d’Este.³⁷ Similarly, the text combines amusing lists of strange sights with sharp critical observations. This theme is continued with an account of a global voyage undertaken by Messer Anonymo, who expresses a wish to ‘andar per il mondo a veder cose rare’. The voyage is recounted in the form of a lengthy list of foreign peoples and their customs, arranged in a loose alphabetical order. The peoples mentioned are taken principally from Jean Tixier *Officina* (1503), but include numerous races and locations typical of medieval travel accounts, including Brahmans, Gymnosophists and pygmies. The self-consciously exhaustive list – emphasized by the claim that a complete account would be longer than any of Livy’s works – has a clearly comic effect, and contributes to what Piotr Salwa has termed ‘una chiara parodia delle relazioni di viaggio e del modo d’interpretarle senza il dovuto senso critico’.³⁸ Nevertheless, such moments of levity also serve to enhance Lando’s more critical reflections, and can be understood as part of a technique of critical defamiliarization that is itself an echo of the *Book*.

³³ For emphasizing of the *Book*’s marvellous content by Italian printers, see Chapter 4.

³⁴ Lando, *Commentario*, p. 28.

³⁵ Lando, *Commentario*, p. 30; p. 48.

³⁶ Lando, *Commentario*, p. 18: ‘Io vi vidi tener le razze d’huomini per venderli come si vendono cavalli, buoi, muli et altri irragionevoli animali, il che parvemi pessimamente fatto’. *TBJM*, p. 30: ‘Also, in Cairo they commonly sell men and women of other laws, just as beasts are sold here at market’.

³⁷ Lando, *Commentario*, p. 71.

³⁸ Salwa, ‘L’esperienza del nuovo’, p. 309.

Courtly readers and romance interest

Having examined Mandeville's impact on fictional literature presented in the form of a travel narrative, the remainder of this chapter will focus specifically on one of the most prominent fictional genres in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The precise meaning of 'romance epic' – often employed interchangeably with terms like 'chivalric epic' and 'chivalric romance' – is notoriously difficult to define, but it can perhaps be best understood as a hybrid genre that 'combines the martial and religious motifs of epic with the ideals of chivalry and courtly love typical of romance'.³⁹ In Italy, Boccaccio's *Teseida* (c. 1340) was fundamental in promoting *ottava rima* as the standard form for epic and narrative verse, whilst thirteenth- and fourteenth-century *volgarizzamenti* of French *chansons de geste* established the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles as stock subject matter. The celebrated works of Matteo Maria Boiardo (c. 1434-1494), Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) and Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) therefore represent the Renaissance apex of a tradition that had evolved over the course of centuries. Corinne J. Saunders rightly observes that 'the figure of the knight errant, the quest, and the notion of *aventure* came to define the chivalric romance form', although a growing interest in the world beyond Europe also paved the way for significant expansions of the genre's geographical scope.⁴⁰

While the *Book*'s composition significantly predates any formal codification of the romance epic genre, scholars of Mandeville have often noted the presence of romance themes within the text. In her influential mid-century study of Mandeville, Bennett describes the *Book* as a 'romance of travel'; more recently, Higgins has noted the ways in which the various versions of the text borrow from and imitate romance writing.⁴¹ Though it might be assumed that the authorial persona of Sir John, a knight errant who travels through foreign lands, sometimes undertaking great perils, is a hero in the romance mould, a cursory reading of the *Book* reveals that Mandeville goes to

³⁹ Dinah Birch, 'Romance Epic' in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) (seventh edition), p. 218.

⁴⁰ Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), p. 58.

⁴¹ Josephine Waters Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville* (New York: Modern Languages Association of America, 1954); Ian Macleod Higgins, *Writing East: The "Travels" of Sir John Mandeville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

significant lengths to undermine any such interpretation. Sir John is often conspicuously absent from a text that focuses predominantly on setting, rather than action. When he does appear, it is not in the role of combatant but that of pilgrim or observer, even drawing attention to his failure to live up to the example set by Alexander and his frailty in old age. As Higgins observes, ‘to the extent that the work is a romance... it is so by virtue of having adopted romance modes and materials’.⁴² This is particularly the case in a number of prominent individual episodes that play on typical romance themes, such as the story of Hippocrates’ daughter, who is transformed into a dragon by a spell that can only be reversed by the kiss of a brave knight, and the Castle of the Sparrowhawk, whose fairy occupant grants a wish to those who keep a seven-day vigil. More broadly, descriptions of the magnificence of temporal rulers, such as the Great Khan and Prester John, and of the strange animals, places and peoples of the East conform to the matter of the romance epic, although such material is by no means exclusive to the genre.

In her study of the reception of the *Book* across Europe, Tzanaki observes a tendency among readers of manuscripts to ignore romance episodes in their annotations.⁴³ This is also the case in the surviving Italian vernacular manuscripts, which offer little indication of specific attention such passages beyond generic marginal glosses. Although romance themes are emphasized in many of the illuminated manuscripts produced in northern Europe, the absence of illustration within the Italian manuscript corpus means that there is little evidence for visual reception. Neither do any Italian-produced manuscript compilations include the *Book* alongside other romance works, as is the case with manuscripts produced elsewhere in Europe.⁴⁴ In spite of its limited circulation in Italy, brief mention must be made here of the Vulgate Latin version of the *Book*. This version is based on the Liège redaction of the romance author Jean d’Outremeuse, who added a series of interpolations concerning Ogier the Dane, a knight of Charlemagne who appears in the *Chanson de Roland* (c. 1100) and subsequent *chansons de geste*. Though the Vulgate text underplays the romance aspects of the Ogier interpolations in accordance with its strongly religious tone, they remain present. The Vulgate manuscript produced by

⁴² Higgins, *The Book of John Mandeville with Related Texts* (Cambridge and Indianapolis: Hackett, 2011), p. xxii.

⁴³ Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, p. 172.

⁴⁴ Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, p. 174.

Leonisio Doglioni in Belluno in 1416 shows extensive signs of interest in Ogier, with rubricated annotations marking each mention of his name in the text. Attention to romance themes in a decidedly religious context is perhaps surprising, and serves as a reminder of the pitfalls of drawing general conclusions about readers' interests based solely on their social background.

The clearest codicological evidence of Italian interest in the *Book* as romance can be observed in the two French manuscripts connected with the Visconti court towards the end of the fourteenth century. Both are of the French Continental redaction, a major textual branch that survives in some twenty-eight witnesses and which spread from Paris to courts across Europe.⁴⁵ In Italy, French networks were instrumental in the early circulation of the *Book* through the Visconti of Milan, whose taste for French culture at the end of the fourteenth century is well documented. The oldest manuscript of the *Book* known to have circulated in Italy, Mo, was produced in 1388 by the French scribe Pierre le Sauvage for Valentina Visconti, recently married to Louis I of Orléans but still living at the Visconti court.⁴⁶ Giulio Bertoni has identified le Sauvage as a secretary of Louis sent to teach Valentina French, and suggests that he may have produced the text at Pavia for her instruction.⁴⁷ A second manuscript connected with the Visconti, MiT, was produced by Richart Hemon in 1396 and subsequently decorated in the workshop of Pietro da Pavia, an Augustinian friar who worked extensively for the Visconti in the 1390s.⁴⁸ Although it is difficult to state with any certainty whether the Italian redaction predates the two surviving French manuscripts, it is clear that the northern Italian courts played a key role in the early dissemination of the *Book*.⁴⁹

Susanne Röhl has observed a tendency among French readers to approach the *Book* as either a literary work or a reference text, highlighting its impact on the milieu

⁴⁵ In 1380, for example, Juan I, future king of Aragon, wrote to his stepmother Marie de France asking for a number of French manuscripts, amongst them a 'Mendivila'. See Alda Rossebastiano, *La tradizione ibero-romanza del 'Libro de las maravillas del mundo' di Juan de Mandavila* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1997), p. 8.

⁴⁶ Mo. See Giulio Bertoni, 'Intorno al codice dei 'Viaggi' di Jean de Mandeville posseduto da Valentina Visconti' in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 49 (1907), 358-66.

⁴⁷ Bertoni, 'Intorno al codice', p. 366.

⁴⁸ See Susanne Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2004), p. 71.

⁴⁹ Further evidence is provided in the late fourteenth-century German translation of Michel Velser, who states that he translated the *Book* in Lombardy from a French copy. Since he is known to have stayed in both Pavia and Milan, his exemplar may even have been from the Visconti library. See Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, p. 184.

of the Parisian court around the turn of the fifteenth century.⁵⁰ Manuscripts that circulated at the French court often privilege romance themes through their paratexts. One example of this is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS n.a.f. 4515, produced for Charles V in 1371, beautifully illustrated with miniatures depicting the stories of Hippocrates' daughter, the Castle of the Sparrowhawk and various royal figures from throughout the text.⁵¹ Paratextual features of the two Visconti manuscripts suggest that they were read in a similar way. The highly decorative first folio of MiT includes an image of a man fighting a dragon directly above the opening initial.⁵² The blue, gold and red leaves that decorate the margins are of the French style that was imitated at Pavia at this time, providing a visual link to the tradition of the Parisian court. Further evidence of this approach to the *Book* can be found in the explicit of both manuscripts, with each scribe referring to the text specifically as a *romanz*: a term that from the twelfth century carried a primarily linguistic significance, but which by the fourteenth century had come to be associated with the narrative genre.⁵³ It is noteworthy that Mo and MiT are the only extant manuscripts in the French Continental tradition that explicitly refer to the *Book* using such terminology. Although it is impossible to state with absolute certainty how the two scribes intended *romanz* to be understood, the duplication of the term indicates a singular approach to the *Book* that emphasized its linguistic (and perhaps literary) form.

With the increasing popularity of the Italian redaction from the beginning of the fifteenth century, the *Book* continued to be read in courtly circles. Three of the twelve surviving Italian manuscripts, all produced in the 1460s, can be linked conclusively with Italian courts. PP was produced in 1465 by Bernardo del Pra of Parma, chancellor to Gandolfo di Rossi, castellan of Pavia, whilst NN was commissioned in 1467 for Magister Leonardo de Legistis, an adviser to Matteo di Capua, Duke of Palena. In spite of the context in which they were produced, neither manuscript shows any signs of a particular interest in romance themes. Their respective owners were not typical courtiers and may have had more didactic interests, nor does a codicological examination suggest they were in any way prestige

⁵⁰ Röhl, 'Le Livre de Mandeville à Paris autour de 1400' in Peter Ainsworth and Godfried Croenen eds., *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 279-96, p. 294.

⁵¹ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 173.

⁵² See Appendix, Figure 1.

⁵³ Modena, Biblioteca Estense cod. fra. 33, fol. 84r: 'Explicit le romant mess[ire] Jehan de Mandeville'; Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana Nr. 816, fol. 109r: 'Explicit li romans de Messire Jehan de Mandeville'.

books. The earliest evidence of Mandeville being read at the Este court of Ferrara comes in the form of NYP, the only surviving manuscript to have been produced in the city. Now preserved in the Morgan Library in New York, it was produced in 1465 by the scribe and miniaturist Niccolò Mascarino, who worked extensively for the Este family during the 1470s and 80s.⁵⁴ Although not comparable to many of the sumptuous books on which he worked, the manuscript must have been produced at considerable expense. Written on parchment in Niccolò's neat humanistic book hand, it also bears a highly decorated first folio with a typically Ferrarese border of red and blue flowerets studded with gold leaf and an unidentified coat of arms. It seems likely, therefore, that its original owner was connected with the Este court, and that the book was produced under specific commission.

The text is accompanied by a thorough marginal gloss in Niccolò's hand that, whilst present throughout, offers occasional insights into the scribe's priorities. In the second half of the *Book*, glosses are more numerous and go into considerable detail concerning the content of the text. There is a particular focus on eastern animals and monstrous races, textual references to which are copied in full in the margin. There is also a discernible emphasizing of wealth: references to the 'pallazo grande del gran Chane' and the 'pallazo magno del gran Chane' appear in quick succession, whilst the palace of Prester John is labelled as 'trionphante'.⁵⁵ However, other 'romance' elements of the *Book* receive little attention: there is a solitary note on Hippocrates' daughter, and no reference at all on the Castle of the Sparrowhawk. This somewhat inconclusive evidence cannot be interpreted as representative of the reception of Mandeville at the Ferrarese court, where the *Book* was widely read. The text is listed as *Giovan de Mandavilla* in the 1495 inventory of the personal library of Ercole I d'Este, and is also mentioned in a letter written by the courtier Teofilo Calcagnino who, having borrowed the *Book* from the duke, had been asked to return it 'per sua

⁵⁴ See Giulio Bertoni, *La Biblioteca Estense e la coltura ferrarese al tempo di Ercole I (1471-1505) d'Este* (Turin: Loescher, 1903), pp. 34-40.

⁵⁵ Fols. 92^{r-v}.

litera'.⁵⁶ Valentina Visconti's copy, now housed in the Biblioteca Estense, may even have entered the library in the fifteenth century.⁵⁷

As the following chapter will explore, the arrival of print exerted a profound influence on the ways in which the Italian version of the *Book* was presented to the reading public. The popularizing tendencies of Italian printers usually manifested themselves in strategies that emphasized the affinity of the work with recent geographical discoveries, rather than aligning the figure of Sir John with the chivalric past. Nevertheless, at least one printer attempted to market the *Book* alongside romance works. The *Book* was printed in Venice by Luigi Torti in 1534, the first year in which he was active and in which his four other known publications were Cassio da Narni's *La morte del Danese*, Marco Guazzo's *Belisario*, *Buovo d'Antona* and *La Spagna*. Torti's selection of Mandeville as one of his initial publications indicates that he was confident it would be a commercial success, but it also appears that he was targeting the *Book* at an audience familiar with romance. Both notions are seemingly confirmed by his printing of a second edition in 1537, a year in which his only other recorded work was the *Innamoramento di Rinaldo*. Brian Richardson has commented on Torti's innovative production of the *Orlando furioso* in two formats in 1535 and 1536, the first a quarto edition in roman type and the second an octavo in gothic aimed at a more popular audience.⁵⁸ It is notable that the *Book* was Torti's first octavo edition, and that from 1537 onwards he published almost exclusively in this format. It should also be noted that sixteenth-century copies of the *Book* show greater evidence of readerly interest in romance aspects of the text than those produced in the fifteenth century, although this remains fairly limited.⁵⁹ As the following section of this chapter will explore, the *Book*'s influence can be more clearly observed in the representation of travel and its description in an influential early fifteenth-century prose romance.

⁵⁶ A transcription of the letter can be found in Giulio Bertoni, *L'Orlando furioso e la Rinascenza a Ferrara* (Modena: Orlandini, 1919), p. 265. The Este library in this period contained a range of similar works, including Marco Polo in both Italian and Latin, Odoric's Latin *Itinerarium* and Hayton of Armenia's *Floire des estoires d'orient*. See Jo Ann Cavallo, *The World Beyond Europe in the Romance Epics of Boiardo and Ariosto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ Alda Rossebastiano, 'Alle fonti del Boiardo: il «fier baiser» nell'*Orlando Innamorato*', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 25 (1982), 19-23 (p. 21).

⁵⁸ Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 96.

⁵⁹ One example of this is BNCF Palatino 22.4.I.4, whose owner Vincente Michaelis Silvestri drew attention with manicule and other marginal marks to story of Hippocrates' daughter and the Castle of the Sparrowhawk.

Andrea da Barberino's *Il Guerrin meschino* (c. 1413)

Romance epic is in many ways a genre characterized by borrowing, strongly influenced by both the classical epic tradition and the medieval Arthurian and Carolingian cycles. Critics have engaged with this dual heritage in a number of ways. Pio Rajna's seminal study of the *Orlando furioso* systematically analysed its medieval sources, whilst Dennis Looney has explored what he refers to as the 'compromising' of classical sources in the works of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso.⁶⁰ There has also been a considerable scholarly focus on the legacy of oral tradition.⁶¹ This section offers an analysis of Andrea da Barberino's *Guerrin meschino* (c. 1413), a text in which all of these kinds of borrowings are present, and which itself exerted an important influence on some of the best known examples of Italian romance epic. It is also a text that actively engages with medieval travel accounts generally and the *Book* in particular, with a specific focus on issues surrounding the reception of such texts.

Originally titled *Il Meschino di Durazzo*, the *Guerrin meschino* was written in Florence by Andrea da Barberino, a prolific translator of Carolingian material from French into Tuscan and *cantastorie* who performed his works in Piazza San Martino.⁶² Andrea's adaptation of high culture romance epic for a broader audience is reflected in the prose form of his works and a focus on verisimilar narrative that is atypical of the genre. Although references to the geography and inhabitants of the eastern world had for centuries been an integral part of the *chanson de geste* tradition, the *Guerrin meschino*'s representation of the theme of travel is particularly innovative. Andrea's engagement with travel accounts is not limited using them as a source of geographical information or romance material, but instead reveals that he observed and imitated their authority strategies and reflected on the question of their credibility.

⁶⁰ Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso: ricerche e studi* (Florence: Sansoni, 1900); Dennis Looney, *Compromising the Classics: Romance Epic Narrative in the Italian Renaissance* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

⁶¹ See in particular Cesare Segre, 'Oralità e scrittura nel epico medioevale' in Bruno Gentili e Giuseppe Paioni eds., *Oralità. Cultura, letteratura, discorso: Atti del Convegno internazionale (Urbino 21-25 luglio 1980)* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), pp. 19-35; and Antonio Scuderi, 'Performance and Text in the Italian Carolingian Tradition', *Oral Tradition* 21, 1 (2006), 68-89.

⁶² Although Andrea is commonly referenced in studies of Italian romance epics, until recently there has been relatively little critical interest in either his biography or works. The most complete study is Gloria Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997). For a full bibliography, see the 'Nota bibliografica' in Mauro Cursiotti's recent critical edition of the *Guerrin meschino* (*Il Guerrin meschino* (Rome and Padua: Antenore, 2005), pp. xlii-xlvii).

Unlike Andrea's other surviving works (*I Reali di Francia*, a prose compilation of Matter of France material, and *Aspramonte*, a reworked translation of the *chanson de geste Aspremont*) the *Guerrin meschino* is a wholly original composition that adds new material to the traditional Carolingian cycle. Written in eight books, it tells the story of Guerrino, heir to the throne of the kingdom of Durrës. Separated from his parents during a Turkish invasion, Guerrino is brought up in Constantinople unaware of his royal lineage. As a young man he becomes a page at the Byzantine court, where he falls in love with the emperor's daughter but is spurned on account of his supposedly humble status. Guerrino is told by an astrologer of the fabled Trees of the Sun and Moon and sets out to question them concerning his lineage. This journey, described in the second and third books, takes the protagonist from Europe through Armenia and Tartary to the loosely defined 'regni d'India', where he encounters wild animals, monstrous races and unusual peoples. Returning from the oracular trees, Guerrino travels to Persia, where he captains the army of the Sultan against the Turks, and onwards through Africa to the land of Prester John, before a return to Europe, his subsequent adventures eventually culminating in the regaining of his throne.

The geography of Andrea's fictional world is considerably more developed and nuanced than other contemporary romance writing. The seminal studies of Heinrich Hawickhorst and Rudolf Peters definitively demonstrated that Ptolemy's *Geographia*, translated into Latin by the Florentine Jacopo d'Angelo da Scarperia in 1406, was an important source for the lists of toponyms found frequently throughout the *Guerrin meschino*.⁶³ More recently, Stephen McCormick has convincingly argued that Andrea's *Ugone d'Alvernia*, a reworking of the French romance *Huon d'Auverne* and the spiritual predecessor of the *Guerrin meschino*, is defined by a 'cartographic subtext' that mirrors the geographical interests of Andrea's Florence and, in particular, his mercantile audience.⁶⁴ Andrea engaged with a wide range of source material, from classical sources such as Ptolemy and Pliny's *Natural History* to Florentine vernacular texts: Dante, Boccaccio and Giovanni Villani's *Nuova cronica* to

⁶³ Heinrich Hawickhorst, 'Über die geographie bei Andrea de' Magnabotti', *Romanische Forschungen* 13 (1901-2) 689-784; Rudolf Peters, 'Über die geographie im *Guerino Meschino* des Andrea de' Magnabotti', *Romanische Forschungen* 22 (1908), 426-505. Whether Andrea had access to a copy of the *Geographia* or to a Ptolemaic map is unclear.

⁶⁴ Stephen McCormick, 'Cartography and Epic in Florentine Humanism and Andrea da Barberino's *Ugone d'Alvernia*', *Viator* 45.3 (2014), 339-62.

bestiaries, the letter of Prester John and travel accounts.⁶⁵ The latter in particular circulated widely among Andrea's Florentine contemporaries, with Tuscan redactions of Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* and Odoric of Pordenone's *Itinerarium* making travel accounts available to a middle class avidly interested in the eastern world, emphasizing references to marvels and commercial prospects whilst underplaying religious and romance aspects of the texts.⁶⁶ Cardini has noted that the world of the *Guerrin meschino* is in many ways that of 'la cultura enciclopedica dei volgarizzamenti fiorentini'.⁶⁷ This was a world to which the *Book* also belonged, as demonstrated by the engagement of contemporary authors with the text (including Jacopo da Sanseverino, discussed in the previous chapter) and the survival of Tuscan manuscripts from this period. FL, produced in Tuscany around the turn of the fifteenth century, contains a note indicating that it was received from one 'Iacopo de Martini de miser Girolamo', a Florentine, in exchange for 'un bellissimo libro del Petrarca'.⁶⁸ Such evidence demonstrates the currency of the *Book* in this period, but also reveals how travel accounts and serious, humanistic texts could circulate within the same circles. This is reflected in the *Guerrin meschino*, a text that as Cardini rightly observes is situated between forms of humanistic and popular culture that are 'connessi strettamente fra loro'.⁶⁹

A concern with the world beyond Latin Christendom and travel through it can be clearly identified from the very opening of the *Guerrin meschino*, where the title of the first book immediately reveals Andrea's integration of the *topoi* of travel accounts with his epic material. Having defined the royal lineage of his protagonist and situated the work within his broader narrative cycle, Andrea sets out both the geographical backdrop of the text and the itinerary that Guerrino will follow:

... tratta tutte e tre parti del mondo: ciò è Asia, Africa e Uropia; tratta degli Alberi del sole e della luna, tratta della Sibilla e tratta del Purgatorio di san

⁶⁵ For more on Andrea's reading, see Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino*, pp. 8-9 and McCormick, 'Cartography and Epic', pp. 340-1.

⁶⁶ On Tuscan manuscripts of Polo and Odoric, see O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 147-60.

⁶⁷ Franco Cardini, 'L'avventura cavalleresca nell'Italia tardomedievale. Modelli letterari e forme concrete' in idem *L'acciar de' cavalieri. Studi sulla cavalleria nel mondo toscano e italico (secc. XII-XV)* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1997), pp. 25-72 (p. 59).

⁶⁸ Fol. 59^r.

⁶⁹ Cardini, 'L'avventura cavalleresca', p. 57.

Patrizio e di molto gran' fatti d'arme che fê questo Meschino cercando il mondo.⁷⁰

Beyond the itinerary of its protagonist, the *Guerrino meschino* is permeated by an awareness of other travelers and the diversity of their motivations. Alongside numerous references to Alexander, the archetypal traveler to the East, a range of realistic travelers populates the text. Missionaries, pilgrims (both Christian and Muslim), merchants, ambassadors, dragomans and guides all feature prominently and interact extensively with Guerrino. The contrast between the rigid character types of standard chivalric epic and the diverse, realistic world of the *Guerrin meschino* is illustrated in a passage in book two. Travelling through Lower Tartary, Guerrino frees a knight from Bayonne and an Armenian priest who have been imprisoned by a giant.⁷¹ In typical romance style, the knight's journey is born of chivalric one-upmanship: having heard others boast of their deeds at the French court, he set out to 'cercare il mondo per mare e per terra'.⁷² By contrast, the priest and his now-deceased companion met with misfortune whilst on a visit to other brothers of their order. This mention of missionaries is atypical in a romance context, and demonstrates the familiarity of Andrea and his readers with forms of Eastern Christianity and fourteenth-century attempts to spread the gospel in the Mongol Empire.

The influence of both real and fictitious travellers on the *Guerrin meschino* is also shown by a number of plot episodes inspired by, and in some instances directly borrowed from, their accounts. Amongst these Mandeville features prominently, furnishing both marvelous episodes and anthropological detail: the *Book* is the source, for example, of the description of the inhabitants of Albania Bianca, whose hair is white at birth before becoming darker with age.⁷³ Guerrino's sojourn in Mecca in the third book presents an opportunity for Andrea to offer detailed reflections on Islam. Here, the report of Muslim pilgrims who throw themselves under the wheels of a cart carrying an image of Mohammed adapts the account of a pagan ritual present in both Odoric and Mandeville's description of India; the reference to the subsequent veneration of the pilgrims as 'santi', a detail present in Mandeville's own reworking

⁷⁰ Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 3.

⁷¹ Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 84.

⁷² Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 85.

⁷³ Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 77.

of Odoric, suggests the *Book* as the most likely source.⁷⁴ Similarly, Andrea's description of the palace of Prester John is heavily inspired by the *Book*, the windows with their crystal columns and ornate decoration of the throne room drawing heavily on Mandeville's description. The golden vine laden with gemstones that overhangs Prester John's throne may be taken from the description of King Porus' palace in the *Alexander Romance*, but Andrea would have encountered the same detail repurposed by Mandeville in his account of the Palace of the Great Khan.⁷⁵ The element that most clearly demonstrates Andrea's creative interpretation of his source material is the detailed description of the throne itself, which forms the episode's literal and figurative centerpiece. Here, the reader is presented with a detailed description of the seven steps that lead up to the throne, the materials of which they are made, and their allegorical equivalence with the seven heavenly virtues. The source for this is again Mandeville, whose outlandish description of seven steps made of increasingly precious stones is moderated and inverted: the lowest step, made of gold, represents the dangers of avarice, whilst the highest, of earth, is a reminder of the value of humility. By careful alteration of his original source, Andrea reworks the passage in a form that not only demonstrates the prelate's piety but also prompts the reader to share Guerrino's response of wonder ('io mi maraviglai') rather than disbelief.⁷⁶

A number of scholars have interpreted Andrea's descriptive style as part of a broader strategy of verisimilitude that can be observed throughout his corpus.⁷⁷ Yet if verisimilitude is at stake in the *Guerrin meschino*, Andrea's borrowings from, and stylistic imitation of, travel accounts pose a potential problem. Reports of the exotic East were by no means universally accepted as accurate in Florence at the turn of the fifteenth century. A sceptical attitude towards the accounts of missionaries to the Mongol Empire is already discernible in Boccaccio's tale of Frate Cipolla, who tells his parishioners of his journey to Parsnip India, passing through the land of lies.

⁷⁴ Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 175-6: 'E udi' dire che l'anno ch'eglino fanno il perdono, molti si mettono sotto le ruote de' carri e fannosi uccidere; e dicono che 'l fanno di volontà per amore di Maomet. E loro corpi ne sono portati nella loro patria e tengono ch'e' sieno santi in compagnia di Maomet'. MaC, fol. 42^v: '[...] li corpi sono posti dinanti al ydolo. Et de la dicono loro che 'storo sono santi, però che de sia [sic.] bona volontà elli se sono morte per lo amore del suo dio. Et cossi como de qua uno parentato sarebe honerato per lo amor de uno sancto che fosse stato de quelli, overo di dire li facti di quelli si meterebero in scripto per canonizare'.

⁷⁵ Andrea da Barberino, *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 230.

⁷⁶ The description had a significant cultural impact, appearing in a number of later texts, most notably in Giuliano Dati's first *Cantare dell'India*. See also Chapter 5.

⁷⁷ See in particular Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino*, pp. 14-30, and McCormick, 'Cartography and Epic', p. 349.

Similar reservations are found in the compendium of the poet Antonio Pucci (1392), who included much material from the account of Marco Polo but redacted the most marvellous content on the basis of Dante's assertion that a man should not speak 'quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna'.⁷⁸ Material evidence in Florentine manuscripts of travel accounts also suggests a variety of attitudes towards the accuracy of their content.⁷⁹ Andrea's awareness of this, and his efforts to reconcile his concern with verisimilitude with the ambiguous attitude of his contemporaries towards travel writing, is evidenced by his imitation of a number of techniques employed by the writers of travel accounts – including Mandeville – to give their reports narratorial authority.

A key element of Andrea's historiographic tone is the regular reference to real and fictitious sources within the text. This is to a degree typical of romance epic, where appeals to the legendary Turpin were common, but in Andrea's corpus such instances are particularly pronounced.⁸⁰ In the *Guerrin meschino* in particular, contradictory sources are often used to discuss and counter established opinion concerning the eastern world. One example of this is a discussion of the etymology of the term 'India', in which Andrea juxtaposes a number of possible interpretations:

E vogliono li autori dire che India sia detta "in due" e che lla Asia sia partita in due parti, ciò è Asia e India. E alcuno dice che India è detta del re Indos, che fue re di quelle province. Alcuno altro dice ch'ell'è detta India perché vede prima el sole ch'altra provincia della terra ch'ène abitata; e questo è vero nome, perch'ella vede prima el 'die': pero è detta "in die".⁸¹

Presenting contrasting opinions in this way serves not only to ground the story of the *Guerrin meschino* in a real-world setting, but also underscores the authority of Andrea's narration. This technique appears in a number of medieval travel accounts but is above all typical of the *Book*, where the juxtaposition of conflicting sources

⁷⁸ *Inferno* XVI, 124.

⁷⁹ O'Doherty cites the example of the Florentine Amelio Bonaguisi, podestà of Cerreto Guidi, who wrote in the colophon of his copy of Marco Polo's account that it contained 'cose da no credere, né di darvi fede'. O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, p. 152.

⁸⁰ Turpin, sometimes identified as an eight-century Archbishop of Rheims, appears throughout the epic tradition as a chronicler of the Christian wars against the Spanish Moors. See Sergio Zatti, 'Turpin's Role: Poetry and Truth in the *Furioso*', in *The Quest for Epic: from Ariosto to Tasso* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 60-94 (pp. 62-3).

⁸¹ *Il Guerrin meschino* II, 23, p. 128.

helps to establish Sir John's authority.⁸² Albrecht Claasen has observed that Mandeville 'knows extremely well how to avoid any possible criticism by raising the most critical questions himself and answering them satisfactorily'.⁸³ The same can be observed of Andrea's narrative voice, which throughout Guerrino's journey provides an authoritative critical commentary on established perceptions of the wider world.

A similar technique employed by Andrea in the *Guerrin meschino* is the indirect reporting of fantastical information. Although much of the description of the eastern world is voiced by Guerrino in his role as first-person narrator, the most incredible marvels – such as the monstrous races or mythical creatures – are often reported by the guides that accompany the protagonist on his journey. This narrative device typically functions through Guerrino's recalling a question that he asked and relaying the guide's response. One example of this comes in book two where, in a passage possibly inspired by the *Book*, Guerrino is told in great detail about the monstrous races that inhabit India.⁸⁴ Here, the repetition of 'dissono' underlines the attribution of the information to a third party, with Guerrino concluding that he was unable to confirm the reports through personal observation. In addition to indicating the increasing value attributed to eyewitness accounts in this period, this echoes Mandeville's use of indirect reports to present his most marvellous material, such as the description of the Earthly Paradise.⁸⁵ Such a technique permits Andrea to include the most fantastical information from his sources without committing himself to their accuracy. In casting Guerrino as a listener, it furthermore serves to reflect on the veracity of exotic travel accounts and their wider reception.

⁸² See, for example, Mandeville's description of the pyramids: 'Some say that they are tombs of the great lords of antiquity, but that is not true, for the common word through the whole country near and far is that they are Joseph's granaries, and they have written it thus in their chronicles. On the other hand, if they were tombs they would not be empty inside, nor would they have entrances for going inside, nor are any tombs ever made of such a large size and such a height – which is why it is not to be believed that they are tombs' (*TBJM*, p. 32).

⁸³ Albrecht Claasen, 'Marco Polo and John Mandeville: The Traveler as Authority Figure, the Real and the Imaginary' in Sini Kanges, Mia Korpiola and Tuija Ainonen eds., *Authorities in the Middle Ages: Influence, Legitimacy and Power in Medieval Society* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 229-248 (p. 244).

⁸⁴ *Il Guerrin meschino* II, 27, p. 139-41: 'Ancora ci dissono che 'n certe montagne di questa selva erano uomeni salvaticchi che hano la testa e lla bocca come e cani, e latrano e abaiano come e cani, e sono chiamati Cainamoni. E dissono che v'era certe parti più verso ove si leva il sole che v'era uomeni che avieno i piè volti di dietro. E dissono che v'era un paese in sul fiume che v'era uomeni con due gambe e avieno il piè ritto tanto grande che quando el sole fa troppo caldo si fanno ombra con quello piede [...] Questi animali non vid'io – dice el Meschino – perché io diliberai non andare tra quelle bestie salvatiche'.

⁸⁵ *TBJM*, p. 179: 'About Paradise I would not know how to speak to you properly, for I was not so far forward, because I was not worthy. But what I have heard said by the wisest men over there I will willingly tell you'.

This theme is further explored in an important episode that takes place at the court of the Sultan of Persia. Returning from the eastern apex of his journey, Guerrino is invited to tell his story before the assembled courtiers. In a mirror of Andrea's own performative role, he recounts his travels, paying specific attention to the strange beasts and other marvels he has witnessed. All present marvel at Guerrino's account and accept it as true, with the exception of a baron, Tenaure, who brands Guerrino a 'briccone falso' on account of his fanciful claim to have seen the Trees of the Sun and Moon. Fearful for his life, Guerrino protests his innocence and challenges Tenaure to a duel, defeating him with God's assistance. The baron privately admits that his disbelief was motivated by sinful envy, but Guerrino demands a public apology:

El Meschino dice: "Io pensai non esser il luogo da farlo battezzare: perdonâgli la vita con patto ch'egli dicesse dinanzi all'amansor avere fallato e chiamarsi mentitore e confessare ch'io dicesse la verità. E così giurò da fare, nel mezzo della piazza in presenza dell'amansor. E io gli dissi: "A tte conviene entrarmi innanzi e andare dinanzi all'amansor e a l'arcalf a dire come io dissi la verità e ttu la bugia".⁸⁶

The episode may be understood as directly concerned with the reception of travel accounts, and bears a clear moral message concerning the relationship between credulity and envy. There is a particularly striking likeness between Andrea and his protagonist, with Guerrino cast in the role of a public storyteller seeking to entertain an audience. In this context, the response of the Persian court might be read as reflective of the attitudes of contemporary Florentine audiences towards exotic travel accounts, with a vocal minority of doubters challenging the authority of reports. When Guerrino like Sir John is granted an audience with the Sultan he takes the opportunity to reflect on this, concluding that 'è beato quello che raffrena la sparante lingua.'⁸⁷

The *Guerrin meschino* is an extraordinary and innovative work that accurately represents the popular worldview of early fifteenth-century Florence. It not only reveals the currency of the *Book* within this context, but also demonstrates the extent of contemporary engagement with the form and content of exotic travel accounts and

⁸⁶ *Il Guerrin meschino* III, 5, p. 171.

⁸⁷ *Il Guerrin meschino* III, 5, p. 172.

the diversity of attitudes towards them. As this chapter will continue to explore, the Italian verse romance epics produced in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries also display evidence of an engagement with the *Book* – although, unlike the *Guerrin meschino*, this is motivated not by attention to the narrative *topoi* of travel accounts, but rather by an interest in model travellers and itineraries.

Romance epic verse: from Luigi Pulci to Cassio da Narni

By the middle of the fifteenth century, original compositions of Italian verse romance epics were becoming increasingly common. This trend focused in particular around the courts of the Medici in Florence and the Este in Ferrara, two contexts characterized by a tradition of humanist scholarship and of strong historical engagement with vernacular romance.⁸⁸ This final section will consider three of the most prominent and widely circulated examples of romance epic produced in Italy in this period – Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* (1481), Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1495) and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516) – as well as a less illustrious imitation of the latter, Cassio da Narni's *La morte del Danese* (1521). These works were written for highly educated humanist patrons who were acquainted with classical literary models; yet, as this chapter has already demonstrated, the *Book* also circulated widely in such contexts. Identifying the influence of travel accounts on specific episodes of these poems is a difficult task, since many of their sources were extremely similar in nature and earlier romances were themselves reused in new compositions. Nevertheless, textual evidence reveals an interest in the *Book* on the part of these romance authors, who shared an interest in its potential as a model itinerary onto which they could project the themes and concerns of their individual works.

Luigi Pulci's *Morgante* (1481)

One of the most successful epic poems of its time, the *Morgante* was written by the Florentine poet and diplomat Luigi Pulci over the course of twenty years following its

⁸⁸ On this see Jane E. Everson, *The Italian Romance Epic in the Age of Humanism: The Matter of Italy and the World of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

original commission around 1460 by Lucrezia Tornabuoni.⁸⁹ Although the central plot of the poem follows Carolingian precedents by juxtaposing the valiant paladins of Christendom with their evil Saracen counterparts, it is in many ways an extraordinarily innovative work. Written in playful, burlesque verse that sometimes borders on parody, the *Morgante* is nuanced by an underlying defence of vernacular Florentine culture in the face of the increasing dominance of Neo-Platonism. Recited in the *piazza* and read at the Medici court, the *Morgante* reflects both the popular and intellectual culture of its time.

Although Pulci does not engage with travel accounts to the same extent as Andrea da Barberino, the *Book's* influence on the *Morgante* can be observed in a number of passages. The clearest instance of this comes in canto 25, where the benevolent sorcerer Malagigi questions the demon Astarotte regarding the whereabouts of the Christian hero Rinaldo. Astarotte describes the journey of Rinaldo and his companions around the Mediterranean, which is motivated not by the action of the poetic plot but by a desire to see the pyramids and other notable sites.⁹⁰ Malagigi's request to hear the 'più famose notizie' of this sightseeing tour reflects contemporary interest in traveller's accounts, and prompts Astarotte to describe the paladins' arduous three-day ascent of Mount Olympus. Upon reaching the summit, Rinaldo finds himself far above the clouds and observe in the dust 'lettere gran tempo scritte prima/in su la rena scolpite leggea,/ché vento o pioggia non par che l'opprima'.⁹¹ As Alessandro Polcri has discussed, these features are part of an established medieval tradition reported by Gervaise of Tilbury, Vincent de Beauvais and Boccaccio in his *De montibus*, according to which the scrawls of ancient philosophers have remained unchanged in the still air.⁹² Polcri identifies Boccaccio as the source most readily accessible to Pulci, although he notes that Mandeville also

⁸⁹ Important contributions include Paolo Orvieto, *Pulci medievale. Studio sulla poesia volgare fiorentina del Quattrocento* (Rome: Salerno, 1978); Constance Jordan, *Pulci's Morgante: Poetry and History in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986); and, more recently, Alessandro Polcri, 'Per un'interpretazione allegorico-morale dei primi due cantari del *'Morgante'* di Luigi Pulci', *Interpres* 15 (1995-6), 94-200. For a good general overview, see Alessandro Polcri, 'Il Morgante' in Gaetana Marrone, Paolo Puppa and Luca Somigli eds., *Encyclopaedia of Italian Literary Studies* vol. 1 (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1520-21.

⁹⁰ *Morgante* 25.122: 'Rinaldo le piramide a vedere/è andato in Egitto'; 25.123: 'villon veder tutto il paese greco'.

⁹¹ *Morgante* 25.122.

⁹² Alessandro Polcri, 'La salita del monte Olimpo e "le lettere gran tempo scritte prima": il caso del *'Morgante'* di Luigi Pulci', *Schede Umanistiche* 1 (1999), 25-59.

refers to similar letters at the summit of both Olympus and Mount Athos. Although the passage offers little indication of Pulci's original source, it marks the beginning of a longer journey for Rinaldo that appears to draw on the *Book* as a textual model.

Leaving the mountain, Rinaldo and his companions ride towards Cairo and then onwards towards Damascus, Jaffa and finally Jerusalem. This roundabout pilgrimage route calls to mind that of Sir John, as well as other models. It is also noteworthy that from 1474 Pulci spent five years in the service of the Milanese *condottiere* Roberto da Sanseverino, who had travelled to Jerusalem in 1458 and whose own pilgrimage account was written in a context in which the *Book* is known to have circulated.⁹³ Having worshipped at the Holy Sepulchre, the paladins set out for Mount Sinai, passing through a 'mar della rena' that can be identified with the Sandy Sea reported in the *Book* and the *Letter of Prester John*. From here, their journey continues southwards:

E sopra a Sinaì saliti, e scesi
Da quella parte ove il gran fiume corre,
villon vedere anche molti paesi,
e dove fu di Nembrotte la torre.
Poi ritornari e' lor destrier ripresi,
saliti prima al bel monte Taborre,
trascorson fino in India al Prete Ianni,
e combatteron là molti e molti anni.

XXV, 128

Again motivated by the knights' desire to observe the world, rather than any element of the plot, this onwards itinerary includes a number of Mandevillean locations. The 'gran fiume' that they follow is evidently the Nile, whilst the Tower of Babel is identified, as in the *Book*, with specific reference to the giant Nimrod. Their ultimate destination of 'India al Prete Ianni' is particularly suggestive of Mandeville, since most other contemporary sources situate the prelate's kingdom in Ethiopia.⁹⁴

⁹³ See Chapter 2.

⁹⁴ For greater detail, see Chapter 5.

Furthermore, these sites do not appear in conjunction in any of the other possible sources for Pulci's description of Mount Olympus.

In addition to providing a model itinerary, the *Book* is also relevant to Pulci's broader discussion of cosmological and theological themes. Having been ordered by Malagigi to locate Rinaldo and deliver him safely to Roncesvalles, Astarotte accompanies the hero on an aerial journey that takes him across North Africa. Upon arriving at the Pillars of Hercules, Astarotte informs Rinaldo that they do not mark the edge of the world as the ancients once thought: there is in fact a second hemisphere with its own 'città, castella e imperio'. For Constance Jordan, this reference marks an important break with tradition, and particularly Dante's understanding of the inhabitable world as limited to the Northern Hemisphere.⁹⁵ Astarotte states that the antipodean hemisphere is equivalent to its counterpart: whilst the pole star is invisible, an Antarctic star can be observed in its place.⁹⁶ This statement prompts Rinaldo to question Astarotte regarding the inhabitants of the Antipodes, specifically regarding the possibility of their salvation since they never heard the good news of Christ. Astarotte states that it is religion that 'discerne le bestie dagli umani', reasoning that, just like those good Romans who lived before Christ, so virtuous pagans may be saved:

Tanto è, chi serverà ben la sua legge
potrebbe ancora aver redenzione,
come de' Padri del Limbo si legge⁹⁷

Jordan identifies this claim of salvation *extra ecclesiam* as particularly innovative, whilst more recently Michael Maher has discerned a similarity between Astarotte's position and Marsilio Ficino's treatment of pagans in his *De Christiana religione*.⁹⁸ The juxtaposition of this discussion with Astarotte's comments on the Antipodes is crucial, since the revision of the established view of salvation is linked explicitly to the existence of peoples who have never received the Gospel. The

⁹⁵ Jordan, *Pulci's Morgante*, p. 148.

⁹⁶ *Morgante* 25.231: 'E come un segno surge in oriente,/un altro cade con mirabile arte/come si vede qua nell'occidente,/però che il ciel gustamente comparte./Antipodi appellata è quella gente'.

⁹⁷ *Morgante* 25.238.

⁹⁸ Jordan, *Pulci's Morgante*, p. 150; Michael Maher, 'Luigi Pulci and Laurentian Florence: "*Contra hypocritas tantum, pater, dissi*"', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013, pp. 98-101.

passage strongly parallels Mandeville's discussion of the existence of the Antipodes, which creatively posits the existence of an Antarctic star and is related to broader proto-universalist themes within the *Book*.⁹⁹ It is furthermore notable that Astarotte, like Mandeville, identifies the Jews as the one group to which the possibility of salvation does not apply, since their ignorance of the fulfillment of prophecy and denial of Christ leaves them beyond redemption. The theme is returned to in the closing canto of the poem when Rinaldo, making his final appearance, leaves the court of Charlemagne to 'cercar il mondo come Ulisse'.¹⁰⁰ As Wolfgang Haase has noted, there are clear parallels between this episode and Dante's myth of Ulysses' final voyage.¹⁰¹ Here, however, the hero is represented as an evangelist who, like Sir John, seeks both miracles and marvels:

E perché ancor di lui quell'angel disse:
 – Ogni cosa esser può, quando Iddio vuole –,
 acciò che quelle gente convertisse
 ch'adoravan pianeti e vane fole
 e se ancor vivo un giorno e' riuscisse
 dall'altra parte ove si leva il sole;
 come molti miracoli se vede,
 qual maraviglia? Chi più sa, men crede.¹⁰²

The *Book* therefore provides an important framework for Rinaldo's travels towards the conclusion of the *Morgante*. In canto 25, Rinaldo's journey, like that of Sir John, is motivated primarily by a desire to see the wonders of the world. However, his discussion with Astarotte concerning the existence of the Antipodes and the eschatological fate of its inhabitants pre-empts his casting in the role of a missionary in the final canto of the poem. Through this transformation, the *Book* makes an important contribution to the *Morgante*'s broader theological discussion and Pulci's challenging of established tradition.

⁹⁹ *TBJM*, pp. 110-16.

¹⁰⁰ *Morgante* 28.29.

¹⁰¹ Wolfgang Haase, *The Classical Tradition and the Americas: European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition*, vol. 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 274-5.

¹⁰² *Morgante* 28.34.

Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1495) and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516)

Matteo Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (published 1495) and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (first edition published in 1516) are commonly considered the most important romance epics of the Italian Renaissance. Composed in Ferrara under the patronage of the Este dukes, where interest in the eastern world had a profound effect on literary creativity, they together present a vast and intricate plot. In her study of Boiardo and Ariosto, Jo Ann Cavallo observes that the *Orlando innamorato* presents a 'broader vision of the globe consonant with a number of ancient, medieval, and fifteenth-century historical and geographical texts'.¹⁰³ Ariosto expands this scope in his completion of Boiardo's unfinished work in order to encompass more recent geographical discoveries, combining the standard material of Carolingian epic with a rich array of characters inhabiting European, North African and Middle and Far Eastern settings.¹⁰⁴ Both Boiardo and Ariosto draw on a vast range of source material, and there is evidence suggest that the *Book* was amongst the works they consulted in the production of their poems.

The world of the *Innamorato* is very much of its time, offering an intriguing glimpse of the European worldview on the brink of the great discoveries mediated through the lens of the Este library. Boiardo's picture of Asia is considerably more developed than that of the earlier *chansons de geste*, populated by distinct peoples belonging to different cultures. Particularly central are the Tartars, represented chiefly by their King Agricane, who take up the role of enemy of Christendom normally played by the Saracens. Evoking the destructive military might of the Mongol Empire, Agricane represents a threat not only to Christendom but to other eastern nations. The appearance of Angelica, the princess of Cathay, at the court of Charlemagne in the opening canto of the poem and her location of her country 'tra l'India e Tartaria' hints at Boiardo's historical knowledge of Mongol expansion and

¹⁰³ Jo Ann Cavallo, *The World Beyond Europe*, p. 18-19.

¹⁰⁴ For Ariosto's geography see the fundamental study of Michele Vernero, *Studi critici sopra la geografia nell'Orlando furioso* (Turin: Palatina di Bonis e Rossi, 1913). See also: Massimo Bontempelli, 'L'Ariosto geografo' in Antonio Baldini ed., *L'ottavo d'oro* (Milan: Mondadori, 1933), pp. 547-68; and Antonio Baldini, *Ludovico della tranquillità: divagazioni ariostesche* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1933); Luciano Serra, 'Da Tolomeo alla Garfagnana: la geografia dell'Ariosto', *Bollettino storico reggiano* 7, 28 (1974), 151-84; Ita Mac Carthy, 'Ariosto the Traveller', *Modern Languages Review* 102, 2 (2007), 397-409; Massimo Rossi, *La geografia del Furioso: sul sapere geo-cartografico alla corte estense* in Paolo Trovato and Michele Bordin eds., *Lucrezia Borgia. Storia e mito* (Florence: Olschki, 2006), 97-138.

pre-empt the climactic war between Tartar and Cathayan forces at Albracà.¹⁰⁵ Whilst Donald Lach rightly observes that Boiardo presupposes a general knowledge of the Tartars among his readers that is clearly based on Polo and Mandeville, the poet's geo-political picture of the East is clearly based on a wider range of sources, likely encompassing chronicles, maps and verbal reports.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Santino Caramella's study of geography in the *Innamorato* has shown that Boiardo most likely used world maps, rather than travel accounts, as the geographical basis for his poem.¹⁰⁷

Specific evidence of Boiardo's engagement with the *Book* can be found in at least one prominent passage. The episode in question features Brandimarte, a Saracen knight errant (and later convert to Christianity) who, alongside his beloved companion Fiordelisa, travels more extensively than any other character in the *Innamorato*. In the course of their journey across Asia in the second canto of book two, the pair encounter a damsel who warns them to avoid a palace in their path. Unable to contain his curiosity, Brandimarte enters the palace where he discovers and defeats a giant and serpent that continuously metamorphose into each other, and a knight guarding a tomb who is similarly dispatched. Trapped inside the palace, Brandimarte is informed by the same damsel that the only means of escape is to open the tomb and kiss whatever appears from within. When a vicious serpent emerges, Brandimarte must summon all his courage; upon his kiss, it transforms into the fairy Febosilla, who rewards the knight by enchanting his armour and reviving his dying horse, injured in the previous battle. This motif of the *fier baisier* appears in a number of medieval romances (chiefly *Lanzelet* and *Il Bel inconnu*), but is also reprised in the *Book*'s story of Hippocrates' daughter, who Mandeville reports was imprisoned on the island of Rhodes in the form of a dragon.¹⁰⁸ Rossebastiano has convincingly argued that Boiardo is most likely to have been inspired by the *Book* on the grounds of its recorded presence in the Este library at the time of the *Innamorato*'s composition.¹⁰⁹ Further similarities between the two texts appear to confirm this. The site of the tomb bears a strong likeness with the *Book*'s setting of the episode in the

¹⁰⁵ *Orlando innamorato* 1.1.52.

¹⁰⁶ Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* vol. 2, book 2, p. 203.

¹⁰⁷ Santino Caramella, 'L'Asia nell'*Orlando innamorato*', *Bolletino della Società geografica italiana* 5, 12 (1923), 44-59 (pp. 127-50).

¹⁰⁸ See *TBJM*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Alda Rossebastiano, 'Alle fonti del Boiardo': il 'fier baisier' nell'*Orlando Innamorato*', *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 25 (1982), 19-23. For other versions of the *fier baisier*, see Roger Sherman Loomis, 'The Fier Baiser in Mandeville's Travels, Arthurian Romance, and Irish Saga', *Studi medievali* 17 (1951), 104-13.

underground vaults of an old castle, whilst the mysterious damsel's reference to previous challengers echoes Mandeville's description of two rescue attempts foiled by their protagonists' lack of bravery.¹¹⁰ Where for Higgins the original passage is 'an indirect critique of the knightly estate', Boiardo's reworking underlines Brandimarte's chivalric bravery and, prompted perhaps by Mandeville's association of the episode with Hippocrates, develops the theme of healing through Febosilla's subsequent actions.¹¹¹ Although few other passages provide so clear an indication of borrowing from Mandeville, it is clear that Boiardo considered the *Book* to be a fitting source for his depiction of Asia.

Further evidence of Mandeville's appeal at Ferrara can be observed in the *Orlando furioso*, composed in the first two decades of the sixteenth century as a completion of the *Innamorato*. Although Ariosto's poem is of fundamentally different character to its predecessor, rejecting Boiardo's nuanced depiction of non-European cultures in favour of a return to a more traditional crusader ideology, it retains and augments the geographical scope of the *Innamorato*, with the innumerable strands of the narrative taking in locations as diverse as the African kingdom of Prester John, the Far Eastern island of the enchantress of Alcina, the Earthly Paradise and even the Moon. Ariosto's awareness of current geographical developments is particularly evident in the second edition of the poem, printed in 1521, which famously sees the allegorical figure of Andronica allude to future Spanish explorers who will 'ritrovar nuove terre e nuovo mondo'.¹¹² Nevertheless, as with Boiardo there are indications that he engaged with medieval accounts to present a picture of the East fully consistent with the expectations of his time.

Many of the Mandevillean locations introduced by Ariosto appear in the itinerary of Astolfo, an English prince and the *Furioso*'s best-travelled paladin, whose journey takes him from a remote eastern island, via the Indies and the Holy Land, to the African kingdom of Prester John and onwards to the Earthly Paradise and the Moon. The similarities between Astolfo and Sir John, both pilgrim knights, are evident: Bennett observes that Ariosto 'makes his great traveller Astolfo an Englishman, and the places he visits are suggestive of Mandeville'.¹¹³ Whilst it must

¹¹⁰ *Orlando innamorato*, 2.26.12: 'Del suo scampo lo aviso, e non mi crede! / Così fa ciascadun che ha poca fede'.

¹¹¹ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 86.

¹¹² *Orlando furioso* 15.22 C.

¹¹³ Bennett, *The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville*, p. 248.

be remembered that Astolfo is inherited from Boiardo and earlier Carolingian material, other critics have observed the ways in which Ariosto radically develops the character.¹¹⁴ Cavallo argues that his transformation into a *miles Christi* is central to the poem's wider plot, whilst Douglas Biow states that 'in Ariosto he [Astolfo] has almost singularly become a figure in quest of the marvellous'.¹¹⁵ Both of these traits have strong similarities with the figure of Sir John, and the exotic patina of his journey is achieved through a number of episodes that bear significant resemblance to the *Book*.

Astolfo is first encountered imprisoned in the form of a myrtle tree on the island of the sorceress Alcina, having been enchanted by her ability to draw fish to shore by magic.¹¹⁶ Once he has been freed from Alcina's curse by the fairy Logistilla, he is accompanied by Andronica, one of Logistilla's handmaids, on a western sea voyage. This itinerary along the coast of 'l'odorifera India' blends the exotic locations of the *Book* and other medieval accounts, such as Taprobane and the 'terra di Tomaso', with those known from recent Portuguese colonial enterprise. Arriving in Arabia, Astolfo travels first to Egypt and then to the Holy Land, where he worships at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This pilgrimage itinerary, which mimics that of Sir John, is of crucial significance to his development from a largely comic character in the *Innamorato* into an agent of God who will play a key role in Ariosto's poem. From Sansonetto, a Christian convert who has been made viceroy of Jerusalem by Charlemagne, Astolfo receives the gift of the belt and spurs of St George, patron saint of Ferrara. Readers at the Este court might well recall Niccolò III's knighting of five of his companions in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on his pilgrimage of 1413, but they would also have been reminded of Sir John, referred to on the frontispieces of Italian editions of the *Book* as a 'streuissimo cavaliere a speron d'oro'.

Following his pilgrimage, Astolfo continues southwards on his journey, following the Nile until he reaches the court of the Ethiopian emperor, Senapo, who, as Ariosto makes fully clear, is none other than Prester John ('Senapo detto è dai

¹¹⁴ On the various representations of Astolfo in Italian romance, see Giuseppe Guido Ferrero, 'Astolfo (Storia di un personaggio)', *Convivium* 5 (1961), 513-30.

¹¹⁵ Cavallo, *The World Beyond Europe*, p. 17. Douglas Biow, *Mirabile Dictu: Representations of the Marvellous in Medieval and Renaissance Epic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 98.

¹¹⁶ A number of critics have identified the island as Japan. See Vernerio, *Studi critici*, pp. 87, 116. Ariosto's description, which emphasizes the exotic nature of the fish, their diversity and their number, has much in common with the *Book*'s description of a miracle that occurs once a year on the island of Talanoch in the Indian Ocean; see *TBJM*, p. 119. On Ariosto's development of the episode, see Biow, *Mirabile Dictu*, pp. 99-102.

sudditi suoi;/gli dician Presto o Preteianni noi').¹¹⁷ The description of the pontiff's palace and his wealth is clearly based less on the apocryphal twelfth-century *Letter of Prester John* than on more recent interpretations of the myth. Chief among these are Andrea da Barberino's *Ugone d'Alvernia* and *Guerrin meschino*, from which Ariosto derives features such as golden doors and bridge chains ('le cateni dei ponti and dei porti...che noi di ferro usiamo, ivi usan d'oro') and the crystal columns that line the imperial palace.¹¹⁸ Although he possesses the magnificent wealth traditionally ascribed to Prester John, Senapo is afflicted by the curses of continual hunger, blindness, and attacking harpies, a punishment from God for his attempted conquest of the nearby Earthy Paradise, which is located (as in the *Book*) 'non lontan con la superna balza dal cerchio de la luna'.¹¹⁹ The influence of the mythological character of Phineus, who was blinded and tormented by harpies for having his own sons murdered, is evident.¹²⁰ However, there are also indications that the episode may be inspired by the *Book*. Mandeville warns that 'many great and wilful Lords' have attempted to do so by following the rivers leading there, but 'many died of fatigue from the movement against the waves and many others went blind and many deaf [...] such that no mortal can approach [Paradise] unless it were with God's special grace'.¹²¹ Astolfo's successful ascent in the following canto marks the culmination of his terrestrial journey, and is explicitly defined as the result of a divine plan:

O baron, che per voler divino
 sei nel terrestre paradiso acceso;
 come che né la causa del camino,
 né la fin del tuo desir da te sia inteso;
 pur credi che non senza alto misterio
 venuto sei dell'arctico emisperio.¹²²

¹¹⁷ *Orlando furioso* 33.106 A.

¹¹⁸ Rajna, *Le fonti*, pp. 532-3.

¹¹⁹ *Orlando furioso* 31.48 A.

¹²⁰ Enrico Cerulli, 'Il volo di Astolfo sull'Etiopia nell'*Orlando furioso*', *Rendiconti della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*, 6th series, 8 (1932), 19-38; Rajna, *Le fonti dell'« Orlando furioso»*, p. 533.

¹²¹ *TBJM*, p. 181.

¹²² *Orlando furioso* 34.55 A.

From here, Astolfo will travel to the moon to reclaim Orlando's lost wits and obtain a cure for Senapo's blindness before leading an army of Ethiopian Christians to defeat the Saracens. However, it is the terrestrial journey that he has already undertaken that allows him to serve God's greater plan. The influence of the *Book* on the shaping of this itinerary indicates that Ariosto considered Sir John – at least in part – to be an appropriate model for his reimagination of Astolfo.

Cassio da Narni's *La morte del Danese* (1521)

Evidence of the *Book*'s continued appeal within the literary circle of the Este court can be found in *La morte del Danese*, written by Cassio Brucurelli (known also as Cassio da Narni), a follower and imitator of Ariosto.¹²³ Published in Ferrara in 1521, the poem derives much of its material from the *Furioso*, which had been published just five years earlier. Whilst not a true completion of its model, it develops many of Ariosto's unfinished threads, telling the story of the rivalry between Orlando and Rinaldo and the death of Ogier, the flight of Rinaldo from the court of Charlemagne, his descent into madness and subsequent recovery, and the journey of Alcida into Hell, guided by the god Mars. This narrative patchwork is matched by Cassio's imitation of a number of canonical literary models, which draws on works as diverse as Ovid's *Ars armatoria* and Dante's *Commedia*. Alberto Casadei has categorized this 'tendenza allo zibaldone' as a deliberate collage of literary imitations, intended for the entertainment of the reader.¹²⁴ As this section will explore, Cassio appears to have used the *Book* in order to develop an episode borrowed from the *Morgante* in a passage that deliberately imitates aspects of the travel account genre.

In the opening canto of the first book, Cassio develops an imitation travel account clearly inspired by the *Book*. Rinaldo, 'desiando vedere/parte del mondo', ask the demons to take him to some faraway region.¹²⁵ The following journey, which lasts no fewer than nine months, takes the knight on an aerial tour of Europe, the Middle

¹²³ Scholarship on *La morte del Danese* is relatively limited. See Alberto Casadei, 'Dopo il secondo "Furioso": La "Morte del Danese" e l'evoluzione del romanzo cavalleresco' in *Il percorso del "Furioso": ricerche intorno alle redazioni del 1516 e del 1521* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), pp. 129-58, and Mariantonietta Acocella, 'Cassio da Narni tra Ariosto e Luciano. La *Storia vera* e il *Charon* nella *Morte del Danese*' in Andrea Canova and Paolo Vecchi Galli eds., *Boiardo, Ariosto e i libri di battaglia: atti del convegno, Scandiano-Reggio Emilia-Bologna, 3-6 ottobre 2005* (Novara: Interlinea, 2007), pp. 287-324.

¹²⁴ Casadei, 'Dopo il secondo "Furioso"', p. 157.

¹²⁵ *La morte del Danese* 1.8.120.

East and Africa. The itinerary clearly echoes the opening of the *Book*, taking Rinaldo from above England over Poland, Hungary, Russia, Slavonia and Bulgaria where, like Sir John, he marvels at the stone bridge over the river Maritsa. Rinaldo then observes the statue of Justinian in Constantinople which, in a detail that is reported in the *Book*, is missing an apple from its hand.¹²⁶ A particularly interesting moment comes at the summit of Mounts Atlas and Olympus, which Rinaldo visits specifically because he has heard reports of the legendary writing in the dust.¹²⁷ Cassio was extremely familiar with romance precedents and it seems probable that his reading of the *Morgante* prompted the inclusion of this motif. The mistaken attribution of the footprints to Mount Atlas is, however, curious. Cassio's use of the *Book* in the canto up to this point suggests that this may be a misreading of Mandeville's own erroneous assignation of the episode to Mount Athos. This would appear to be confirmed by Cassio's further development of Rinaldo's itinerary, which continues to mirror the *Book*. From Greece, Rinaldo continues over the Middle East and North Africa, identifying Mandevillian locations and their associated lore, such as the location of the Tower of Babel (which, as in the *Morgante*, is explicitly associated with Nebroth).¹²⁸ Rinaldo is particularly enthused by the Nile and asks the demons about its origin. They satisfy his 'voglie bramose' by taking him as far as the Earthly Paradise, where he observes this for himself, in doing so surpassing the zenith of Sir John's own journey. Rinaldo takes great delight in satisfying his desire for knowledge of the world, and Cassio's conclusion that 'che del mondo a veder gli restò poco' marks the extent to which, using the template of Sir John, he is transformed into a global traveller.¹²⁹

Conclusion

¹²⁶ *La morte del Danese* 1.8.122: 'Vide la gran citta che Grecia honora/la imagin vide de Iustiniano/il pomo in mano disse ch'avea allhora'. *TBJM*, p. 8: 'In front of this church is the statue of the Emperor Justinian covered with gold, and he is on a horse, crowned; and he used to hold in his hand a round gilded apple, but it has long since fallen out'.

¹²⁷ *La morte del Danese* 1.8.125: 'Vide lo Olympo monte insieme Attalante/e perche inteso havea che sopra a quello/l'aria salirvi non era bastante/chiarir si volse et fu chiaro a penello/perho che su la cima littere alquante/lesse scritte col deto: che sugello/era ch'el vento guaste non l'havea/et che l'aria salir non vi potea'.

¹²⁸ *La morte del Danese* 1.8.128: 'La Babilonia vide et la eminente/torre, che fece il superbo Nebrotte'.

¹²⁹ *La morte del Danese* 1.8.131.

The *Book* made an important contribution to the literary culture of the courts of Florence and Ferrara, and particularly the interest in the eastern world that shaped the production of romance epic. Although specific borrowings from the *Book* in these poems are often difficult to identify, the instances discussed in this chapter reveal the specific use of Mandeville as an odoeporic model. As we have seen, this can be understood as part of a broader interest in the *topoi* and narrative structures of the travel account, discernible in the work of Andrea da Barberino and Jacopo da Sanseverino in early fifteenth-century Florence, and much later in Ortensio Lando's *Commentario*. Whilst authors of romance may have been less obviously inventive in their imitation, this must be understood in the context of a highly codified genre. Their approaches to the *Book* are defined by a shared interest in the motif of travel, yet differentiated by the individual focuses of their works. In modelling the journeys of their characters on that of Sir John, these authors not only imitated the *Book*'s *topoi* and structures, but also unwittingly mimicked Mandeville's own creation of a fictional travel account.



Figure 5: Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana MS 816 (Mi), *The Book of John Mandeville*, fol. 1^r.

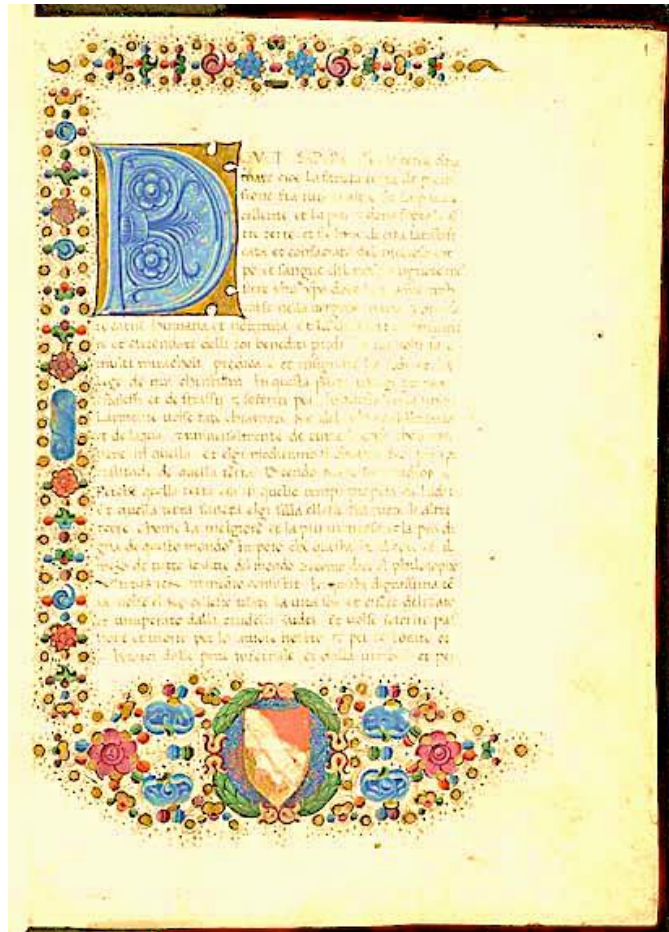


Figure 6: New York, Morgan Library MS 746 (NYP), *The Book of John Mandeville*, fol. 1^r.



Figure 7: Astolfo's flight to the Moon above the palace of Prester John. From the 1542 Venetian edition of the *Orlando furioso* published by Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari, p. 184^v.

Chapter 4: An Image of the World

Although contemporary readers of the *Book* approached it in numerous ways, its great legacy has proved to be its fantastical description of the lands beyond the Levant. The marvellous depiction of the Indies that enthused popular audiences around the turn of the sixteenth century continues to appeal to readers today. In modern scholarship, the *Book* is more often listed alongside medieval reports of East Asia than it is described as a work of pilgrimage literature. Mandeville's impact on the geographical imagination at the time of the discovery of the New World holds a particular fascination. Stephen Greenblatt has connected the *Book*'s invocation of *mirabilia* with the emerging discourse of colonization, whilst the popular historian Giles Milton voices the common understanding that that 'the book's importance in the first two centuries after it was written lay in its contribution to geography and exploration'.¹

Scholars of the *Book* have also sought to demonstrate its continued influence on geographical thought. Christiane Deluz has described the text as 'un livre d'une géographie qui ne sait pas encore dire son nom', whilst Tzanaki observes the longevity of the text's geographical relevance.² Certainly, there are numerous recorded instances of geographers engaging with the *Book*. The German cartographers Martin Behaim and Hartmann Schedel both cited Mandeville as an authoritative source in the 1490s, whilst as late as the 1570s Mandeville is referred to in the celebrated atlases of Gerardus Mercator and Abraham Ortelius (albeit with some reservations regarding his accuracy).³ Although there is no concrete evidence that Columbus himself read the *Book*, Mandeville is mentioned on several occasions by his biographer Andrés Bernaldez in the *Historia de los Reyes Católicos* (c. 1513). In England, the *Book* was known to explorers such as Walter Raleigh and Martin Frobisher, who took a copy on his 1576 voyage to find a northwest passage to China;

¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Giles Milton, *The Riddle and the Knight: in Search of Sir John Mandeville* (London: Allison and Busby, 1996), p. 271.

² Christiane Deluz, 'Le livre Jehan de Mandeville, autorité géographique à la Renaissance' in Jean Céard and Jean-Claude Margolin, eds., *Voyager à la Renaissance: Actes du Colloque de Tours 1983* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1987), 205-20 (p. 209); Rosemary Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences: A Study on the Reception of the Book of Sir John Mandeville* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 111.

³ For Behaim's use of the *Book*, see C. W. R. D. Moseley, 'Behaim's Globe and "Mandeville's Travels"', *Imago Mundi* 33 (1981), 89-91. For the other cartographers, see Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 75-76.

it was also included in the first edition of Richard Hakluyt's monumental compilation of travel accounts, the *Principal Navigations* (1589).⁴ Such instances of individual engagement with the *Book*, however, have often been extrapolated into an inaccurate assumption that Mandeville was universally seen as a geographical authority. As John Larnier has succinctly observed, 'the *Book* was rarely afforded any serious standing in scholarship or cartography.'⁵

There is little evidence to suggest that the *Book* exerted any great influence on Italian cartographical production or on humanist geographical thought, both of which were increasingly dominated by the Ptolemaic model following the Latin rediscovery of the *Geographia* in the early fifteenth century. Contemporary eyewitness accounts, such as those of the Venetians Niccolò de' Conti (d. 1469) and Giosafat Barbaro (d. 1494), also supplied a wealth of up-to-date information on the eastern world. Nevertheless, as this chapter will explore many Italian readers of the *Book* continued to display interests that might broadly be termed 'geographical': from seasoned merchant travellers intrigued by its reports of eastern riches to producers of Ptolemaic maps who sought to popularize the dominant intellectual framework. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Italian printers of the *Book* would shape it into a work of popular geography that appealed to a readership fascinated by the reports of recent discoveries; later still, collectors and natural historians would turn to the *Book* for its descriptions of rare gemstones and unusual animals. These markedly different approaches to the *Book* are united by an appreciation of its value as a source of information on the marvellous world beyond the Levant.

The *Book* as geography

In order to examine these readings, it is first necessary to discuss exactly what is meant when we speak of the *Book* as a 'geography'. At the time of the *Book*'s writing in the mid-fourteenth century, this precise term was used relatively infrequently. Far more common was *cosmographia*, familiar from the works of classical authors, including Pliny and Pomponius Mela, and more recent writers such as Bernardus

⁴ Hakluyt removed the text from his second edition of 1598.

⁵ John Larnier, 'Plucking Hairs from the Great Cham's Beard: Marco Polo, Jan de Langhe and Sir John Mandeville' in Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Amilcare Iannucci eds., *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 133-55, (p. 145).

Silvestris.⁶ This designation encompassed not only the mapping of the heavens and the earth but also a broader range of natural historical subjects, including geology, ethnology and the description of animals and monstrosities. All these elements are present in the *Book* and contribute to Mandeville's stated aim of describing the earth's 'lands, the islands, and the diverse animals and diverse peoples'.⁷ Passages as varied as a discussion of the virtues of the diamond, anatomical descriptions of real and mythological beasts and reports of natural marvels such as the Sandy Sea all contribute to an encyclopaedic description of the eastern world. The *Book* also engages actively with theoretical aspects of geography. A lengthy discussion of the Earth's sphericity, the possibility of circumnavigation and the existence of the Antipodes draw on sources such as Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, John of Sacrobosco's *De sphaera* and Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*.⁸ Reflections on the (non-existent) Antarctic pole star and the Ptolemaic climates further enhance Mandeville's geographical credentials.

This rich and complex representation of the world is, however, firmly grounded in Christian tradition. In accordance with medieval tradition, Jerusalem is placed at the physical centre of the world, a position that is emphasized on three separate occasions and which underpins the geography of the *Book*. In this context, the description of the eastern world in the second half of the *Book* can be seen as a mirroring of Christendom.⁹ The rivers that flow towards the holy city from the Earthly Paradise parallel the opening pilgrimage, whilst the description of eastern morality functions as a critical mirror for Latin Christianity. Ethnology is discussed in terms not only of the biblical past, as in a tripartite division of the world linked to its postdiluvian repopulation by Noah's sons, but also to humanity's ultimate fate through Mandeville's attitude of Christian universalism.¹⁰ As Higgins has observed,

⁶ On the distinction between the two terms and their use in Italy, see Marica Milanesi, 'Geografia e cosmografia in Italia tra XV e XVII secolo', *Memorie della Società Astronomica Italiana* 65 (1994), 443-68.

⁷ *TBJM*, p. 89.

⁸ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 86.

⁹ See in particular Ian Macleod Higgins, 'Defining the Earth's Centre in a Medieval "Multi-Text": Jerusalem in the *Book of John Mandeville*' in Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Giles ed., *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp. 23-53.

¹⁰ This reading of Genesis 9:19 and 10:32 was well established by Mandeville's time. See Benjamin Braude, 'The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, 1 (1997), 103-42. On issues related to the portrayal of Mandeville as a Christian universalist, see Robert Patterson, *Mandeville's Intolerance:*

the *Book* displays ‘a concern with the relation between territory and Christian history, or, more generally, with the earthly *place* of Christianity’.¹¹

In the two centuries following the writing of Mandeville, the worldview of Christian Europe was to change dramatically. The increasing prevalence of the Ptolemaic model, both in humanist circles and more widely, challenged the privileged position of the *mappamundi* model and prompted debate over the most appropriate way to cartographically represent the world.¹² Exploration of Africa and Asia by the Portuguese, and of the Americas by the Spanish, opened up vast tracts of the globe previously unknown to Europeans, whilst the proliferation of contemporary eyewitness accounts of the likes of Niccolò de Conti, Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci provided new and reliable information. In Italy, perhaps more than anywhere else in Europe, interest in the discoveries was a cross-social phenomenon, with cheaply produced printed chapbooks and editions circulating widely. For all these developments, however, the medieval worldview remained a resilient lens.

Merchant readers

The consumption of medieval travel accounts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy has often been connected with the mercantile middle classes, particularly in the cities of Florence and Venice. A literate social group with a degree of disposable income, merchants were also increasingly aware of the commercial opportunities presented by engagement with the wider world. Italian trade networks stretched far beyond the Mediterranean and news from abroad circulated widely, particularly in Venice where returning merchants were required to submit a written report of their travels to the *Signoria*. Accounts of the exotic East were unsurprisingly popular in this context. Codicological evidence from fifteenth-century manuscripts indicates that the primary audience for the vernacular versions of Odoric’s *Itinerarium* and Polo’s *Devisement*

the Contest for Souls and Sacred Sites in the Travels of Sir John Mandeville (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University in St Louis, 2009).

¹¹ Ian Macleod Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 33.

¹² See Evelyn Edson, *The World Map 1300-1492: The Persistence of Tradition and Transformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), pp. 205-26.

was what Lucio Monaco has termed a ‘pubblico di cultura mercantesca’.¹³ As the work of Marco Cursi on the reception of the *Decameron* has demonstrated, however, labels such as ‘mercantile’ can be problematic.¹⁴ The fact that a manuscript was produced on paper or written in a *mercantesca* hand does not necessarily imply that its owner was a merchant. Furthermore, not all those involved in trade were of comparable social standing. In Venice, for example, the highly educated patriciate elite shaped maritime trade networks at a strategic level but also travelled themselves throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.¹⁵ In many instances it seems prudent to follow the example of O’Doherty in referring more loosely to a ‘broader bourgeois, mercantile, administrative and lay reading public’.¹⁶

Altogether, six of the twelve extant Italian manuscripts of the *Book* broadly correspond to the criteria of low-grade, owner-copied production typical of this kind of circulation. In many instances, incipits or marks of ownership allow the identification of specific middle-class readers, such as Bernardo Lanzavecchia, a grammar school teacher in Appiano Gentile who included the *Book* in a compilation produced in the 1470s, and Antonio del Gayo of San Quirico near Genoa, who copied the *Book* in 1442 ‘per non stare hociosso né cadere in desesperacione’.¹⁷ Surviving copies of printed editions also often contain sums scrawled on flyleaves or the annotation of passages that refer to eastern trade.¹⁸

More specific evidence suggests that the *Book* was read by travelling merchants with a professional interest in overseas trade. LBL, produced in Padua in 1465, includes references to local customs on the Aeolian island of Lipari that the scribe claims to have witnessed in person.¹⁹ The *Book* was also known to Giosafat

¹³ Lucio Monaco, *Memoriale toscano. Viaggio in India e Cina (1318-1330) di Odorico da Pordenone* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1990), p. 68. Nine of eighteen surviving manuscripts of the Tuscan version of the *Itinerarium* can be linked to a mercantile readership. The scholarship of Consuelo Wagner Dutschke and Marianne O’Doherty has shown a similar pattern in Tuscan manuscripts of Polo; see O’Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 137-52 and Dutschke, ‘Fra Pipino’, p. 25-42.

¹⁴ See Marco Cursi, *Il ‘Decameron’: scritture, scriventi, lettori. Storia di un testo* (Rome: Viella, 2007).

¹⁵ See Francisco Apellániz, ‘Venetian Trading Networks in the Medieval Mediterranean’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 44, 2 (2013), 157-79.

¹⁶ O’Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, p. 149.

¹⁷ MiA and OB.

¹⁸ For example, Parma Biblioteca Palatina Inc. Parm. 223, fol. e2^v, a copy of the edition published in Bologna in 1492 by Giovanni Giacompo and Giovanni Antonio de’ Benedetti.

¹⁹ LBL, fol. 17^r: ‘Et apresso una ixola chiamata Lipari, la quale soleua ardere ma al prexente non arde, per che le done de quella ixola se avodò alla nostra dona de non beber mai vino se quello fuoco zesaua, et zessò, et chussi le done non beve vino. Questo ho visto io personalmente’. The same tale also appears in Leandro Alberti’s *Descrittione di tutta l’Italia* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1550).

Barbaro, the Venetian patrician who travelled extensively in Eastern Europe and around the Black Sea in the mid-fifteenth century before his appointment as ambassador to Persia in 1472. A diplomat and trader, Barbaro is representative of an educated, wealthy mercantile class with a commercial interest in the eastern world. The account of his travels, written during his retirement and published in 1543 by Antonio Manuzio, is a remarkable work that demonstrates its author's keen eye for observation, literary erudition and interest in eastern culture and customs.²⁰ In his preface, Barbaro refers to his familiarity with works on the East by a number of authors, ancient, modern and *novissimi*. Alongside Marco Polo and Niccolò de Conti, 'nostri vinetiani', the second category includes 'Giovanni da Vanda villa inglese'.²¹ Although some episodes display their similarities with the *Book*, there is no conclusive evidence that Barbaro used it as a source.²² However, his awareness of Mandeville and willingness to place him alongside esteemed Venetian sources implies that he considered the text to be a valid geographical authority.

The *Viaggio verso ponente* of Cristoforo Fioravanti and Niccolò de Michiel (1432)

Further evidence of Mandeville's appeal among a travelling mercantile elite can be found in one of the earliest surviving Italian manuscripts of the *Book*, MaC. Now preserved in Mantua's Biblioteca Teresiana, the copy was produced in Venice in 1432 for two merchants: Cristoforo Fioravanti, possibly a Florentine, and Niccolò de Michiel, a member of an influential Venetian patrician family.²³ The manuscript represents not only the most reliable example of Group α , but is also of great value as a testament to the extraordinary circumstances that prompted its production. In the spring of 1431, Fioravanti and de Michiel left the Venetian port of Heraklion aboard

²⁰ *Viaggi fatti da Vinetia alla Tana, in Persia, in India, et in Constantinopoli*. The collection, which also includes the account of Contarini, was reproduced in the second volume of Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1559).

²¹ Fol. A3^v.

²² For instance, Barbaro's description of Mongol religion contains a number of similarities with the reports of both Mandeville and Polo, in particular the statement that the Mongols are idolaters who worship the first living creature they encounter in the morning. The proverb of the 'three eyes of the world', present in the *Book*, appears twice in Barbaro's account, but is also reported by Niccolò Conti, who Barbaro lists. Joan Pau Rubiés has stated that it is unlikely that Barbaro borrowed this or other material. See Rubiés, 'Late Medieval Ambassadors and the Practice of Cross Cultural Encounters, 1250-1450' in Palmira Brummett ed., *The 'Book' of Travels: Genre, Ethnology and Pilgrimage, 1250-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 37-112.

²³ The de Michiel family was one of the established patrician *case vecchie*.

the ship of another Venetian, Pietro Querini, bound for Flanders with a cargo of valuable wood and wine. On reaching Cape Finisterre in early November, the *Querina* was caught in a violent storm that broke the masts and rudder, leaving it to drift into the Irish Sea. The crew were forced to abandon the ship off the northwest coast of Scotland, boarding lifeboats; many of the sixty-eight crew drowned or died of starvation in the following weeks. In early January, eleven survivors – amongst them Querini, Fioravanti and de Michiel – were washed ashore near the fishing village of Røst in the Norwegian archipelago of Lofoten, some 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Nursed back to health by the locals, they returned overland to Venice where they arrived on the twelfth of October. Along with a report of the voyage written by Querini for the Venetian Senate, Fioravanti and de Michiel dictated their own account, the *Viaggio verso ponente*, to Antonio di Matteo di Corrado di Cardini, a Florentine notary. Until now the earliest known manuscript of the account was a copy produced in Venice the 1480s; however, MaC includes a version of the text that can conclusively be proved to be the original.²⁴

Written on parchment in Antonio's neat book hand with rubricated initials and minor filigree decoration, the manuscript does not conform to the low-grade standards commonly associated with a mercantile readership. The *Book* and the *Viaggio* are followed by the Latin *Tractatus de vita et morte religiosi viri Galeoti Roberti de Malatestis*, a hagiographic account of the life of the son of Pandolfo III Malatesta, a Franciscan Tertiary who died in October 1432. Interspersed between these texts are two religious poems, also in Antonio's hand: the former serves as an epilogue to the *Viaggio*, describing Fioravanti and de Michele as 'new Jonahs' saved by God's mercy; the latter is a didactic description of the four evangelists following the life of Galeotto Roberto.²⁵ That the manuscript was commissioned specifically to commemorate the safe return of the two merchants is made clear in the incipit to the

²⁴ For a transcription of the later manuscript, see Paolo Nelli, ed., *Il naufragio della Querina: veneziani nel circolo polare artico* (Rome: Nutrimenti, 2007), pp. 15-43. In addition to a colophon dating the manuscript to 1432 and identifying the scribe as Antonio, MaC includes numerous instances of the 'papal knot' abbreviation mark, suggestive of a scribe who, like Antonio, had trained at the papal chancery.

²⁵ Fol. 80^v: 'Ho novel Jona e tra Silla e Charidi/Solchato ay el varcho armato cum lo/Sichur suprema pelle de richa formicha/Da la fede aiutato or men che ridi/Bonta del tuo signore non vol ti fidi/Del ciecho mondo pien de senzo e vidicha/Ma che ta menti lui e qual nutricha/Ogni pianta giel moglia o che se guidi/E se honesta invidia e atto degno/Al tuo Mirabel monstro serian molti/Vaghi poter rider ifa a tal segno/Dunque saper Madona i pensieri volti/Per ritornarci di dani passati/Facendote con i tuo nati beati/E se ay suo modi giuti/Comprenderai che essendo uno corpo deso/Or sano e forte ta reduto imenso'.

Viaggio, where Antonio refers to his work as a ‘compilatione fornita [...] per lo referir de ser Cristofallo Fioravante et ser Nicholò de Michielle, veneciani, trovatosi alli presenti pericoli’.²⁶ In this context, the decision to commission a copy of the *Book* – and indeed its position within the compilation as the first and largest constituent text – is of particular interest. Unlike comparable travel accounts, such as that of Polo, the *Book* integrates secular travel into an overarching Christian worldview. Antonio’s rubrication of quotations from scripture, a practice often observed in manuscripts produced in an ecclesiastical context, corresponds with a more general religious tone within the manuscript.

Nevertheless, the *Book* also represented an appropriate choice for Fioravanti and de Michiel as merchants with first-hand experience of commercial travel in the Mediterranean and beyond. Evidence of geographical interest is shown by the presence of marginal annotations throughout the *Book* in a mid-fifteenth century cursive hand. Although these cannot be attributed with certainty to either Fioravanti or de Michiel, their dating and content would suggest they were left either by one of the merchants or a subsequent owner of similar standing and interests. The annotator pays particular attention to the geography of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, identifying locations passed by the *Querina* on her fateful voyage, such as Tripoli and the Pillars of Hercules, as well as other sites with which Fioravanti and de Michiel may have been familiar. Comment on the Holy Land is limited primarily to the identification of cities and topographical sites such as Damascus and the Dead Sea, with the mention of a few biblical figures. The annotations that accompany the second half of the *Book* are markedly mercantile in character, with references to tradeable goods such as pepper and wool. Wealth is also a clear theme, with numerous annotations referring to the presence of precious stones and notes that identify ‘lancai richissima’ and the ‘palazzo e ricchezze del Gran Cane’.²⁷ Mention is also made of the boats of Hormuz, which are built without using nails: an oddity that would have been of clear interest to seasoned mariners like the two Venetians. The most extensive comments of all, however, are reserved for the passage on the sphericity of the Earth, the most developed moment of geographical thinking in the *Book*. Here, the annotator notes the number of degrees of the firmament seen by Sir John, the centrality of

²⁶ MaC, f. 74^r.

²⁷ MaC, f. 50^{r-v}.

Jerusalem, the size and shape of the earth and the equivalence between degrees of the firmament and earthly distance.²⁸ In addition to the general geographical character of the annotations, this level of engagement with the text at its most technical point suggests that Fioravanti and de Michiel saw the *Book* not only as an appropriate commemoration of their salvation, but also as a work relevant to their specific commercial and geographical interests.

Mercantile interest in Florence

In Florence, Venice's great commercial rival, accounts of the East circulated just as widely. As the previous chapter has explored, the *Book* had been read by Florentines from the late fourteenth century, with ideas from the text filtering into popular literary culture. It was at the turn of the sixteenth century, however, that the *Book* reached the height of its popularity in the city, with two printed editions produced between 1492 and 1504. This was a period in which Florence was seeking to expand its commercial horizons beyond Europe, with its banks competing to fund Spanish and English exploration of the Atlantic and merchants establishing trade routes in the Mediterranean and beyond. The success in print of both medieval travel accounts and popular texts related to these voyages of discovery indicates the appetite of the Florentine middle classes for information on the mercantile possibilities offered by the wider world.

Several copies of the *Book* that circulated in Florence at this time display evidence of this kind of interest. New York Public Library *KB 1497 was owned by a Florentine whose annotations draw attention to a range of tradeable goods, from Cypriot wine to nutmeg and mastic, Indian cotton trees and fruit from the land of Prester John. Similarly, Rome, BAV Inc. IV 263, a copy of the Florentine edition of 1492, contains annotations that refer not only to aspects of biblical history but also to the harvesting of balm and pepper and 'l'isola de Cathay onde viene le spezierie'.²⁹ Although the precise identity of these scribes remains unclear, their vernacular annotations in cheaply produced copies of the *Book* are suggestive of a broadly

²⁸ MaC, fol. 43^v: 'Gradi del firmamento viduti dallo scrittore cioe io. ½ di soto alla meta' del nostro emisfero'; fol. 44^r: 'Gierusalemme in mezzo alla terra cioe sotto equato[re] rispetto ai cieli'; 44^v: Rotondità e quantità di tutta la terra; fol. 45^r: 'Ogni grado delli 360 del firmamento importa la larghezza o longhezza in terra di miliari 89'.

²⁹ Fol. g7^r.

mercantile interest in the eastern world. Evidence of a similar approach can be found in a manuscript compilation, known as the Codex Vaglianti, now conserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence.³⁰ Produced before 1514 by the Florentine merchant Piero di Giovanni Vaglianti, the compilation contains extracts from printed reports of the latest discoveries, as well of other items of interest. The Codex is of particular value since it represents the geographical concerns of a member of the Florentine mercantile classes, interested not only in the marvels of the East but also in the tangible possibility of commercial expansion.

Piero was a seasoned merchant who had travelled extensively throughout the Mediterranean before he set up business with his brother Bernardo in Pisa in 1475. At this time, Piero would have been fully aware of the commercial possibilities presented by the world beyond Europe: Bernardo's wife, Francesca, was the daughter of Bartolomeo Marchionni, a Florentine merchant based in Lisbon who was amongst the chief exporters of sugar from Madeira and later funded Portuguese voyages to Brazil and India. When Piero lost many of his assets during the First Italian War, he began gathering material related to the new discoveries, motivated perhaps by the hope of recouping his losses through his own involvement in similar enterprises.³¹ Best known to modern scholars for its inclusion of the letter to Piero Soderini attributed to Amerigo Vespucci, the Codex also contains a copy of Marco Polo's account and a number of extracts from the *Book*, followed by numerous letters concerning the Portuguese discoveries, several brief texts of historical character and what may be the earliest surviving Italian translation of the Koran.

Although the manuscript is in many ways similar to a *zibaldone*, the compilation of travel accounts forms a distinct section that, as Luciano Formisano has observed, 'obbedisce a criteri di selezione e di ordinamento che da mera compilazione la trasformano in antologia'.³² The place of the two medieval accounts within the compilation as a whole is of particular interest. An abbreviated version of Polo's *Devisement du monde* is the first entry, followed by three extracts from the *Book*. Intriguingly the explicit to Polo's account alludes to 'Giovan Bandivilla hovero

³⁰ MS Riccardiana 1910. A recent edition of the manuscript has been published and provides a thorough description. See Luciano Formisano ed., *Iddio ci dia buon viaggio e guadagno: Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana ms. 1910 (Codice Vaglianti)* (Florence: Polistampa, 2006).

³¹ Luca D'Onghia, 'Vaglianti, Piero' in *Enciclopedia machiavelliana*, ed. by Gennaro Sasso (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2014), vol. II, pp. 641-42.

³² Formisano ed., *Iddio ci dia buon viaggio e guadagno*, p. 21.

Marco Polo veneziano'.³³ Formisano interprets this not as an error on Vaglienti's part, but rather as indicative of his intention to provide a summary of traditional encyclopaedic geographical knowledge that acts as a preface to the latest reports.³⁴ Taking this assessment as a starting point, it is interesting to consider the reasons behind Vaglienti's selection of the three passages from the *Book*. The first of these is a description of Hungary from the opening pages of the *Book*, whilst the second and third describe the pilgrimage route from Italy to Jerusalem and onwards to Damascus; here specific attention is paid to the Florentine context, with an additional interpolation mentioning that those in Tuscany would be better served by departing from Genoa or Porto Pisano than Venice.³⁵ The inclusion of these locations, which are absent from Polo's account, may well have been prompted by Vaglienti's commercial interests. Buda had hosted a significant community of Florentine merchants, dealers primarily in cloth and copper, since the late fourteenth century, whilst Florence had established consular privileges with Damascus in the 1480s and 90s.³⁶

The examples discussed above reveal a significant interest in the *Book* among central and northern Italian merchants, particularly in the trade hubs of Florence and Venice. These readers mapped their interests onto the text, emphasizing passages of commercial and geographical interest. The *Book* was an important part of the vernacular textual culture associated with a mercantile audience in both cities, although as the case of Cristoforo Fioravanti and Niccolò de Michiel shows this did not preclude members of the Venetian patriciate, the city's ruling class. As the following section of this chapter will explore, the *Book*'s impact on scholarly geography was somewhat more peripheral.

Humanism and cartography: the *Book* at the margins

The fifteenth century in Italy saw a great revival of scholarly interest in the study and mapping of the earth. Italian humanist interest in geography was by no means a recent

³³ Fol. 39r.

³⁴ Formisano, *Iddio ci dia buon viaggio e guadagno*, p. 21.

³⁵ Fol. 39v: 'E prima, per più comodità, chi volesse andare per mare si va a Vinegia, o chi fusse in Toscana a Genova o in Porto Pisano, esendovi pasaggio'.

³⁶ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 196-7 (p. 184).

development, as evidenced by Petrarch's significant engagement with the works of Pliny and Pomponius Mela and Boccaccio's *De montibus, silvis, fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus, stagnis seu paludibus et de diversis nominibus maris* (c. 1356), a reference dictionary of classical geography that circulated widely, usually alongside the *Genealogie deorum gentilium*.³⁷ Yet the re-emergence of Ptolemy's *Geographia* is often cited as the herald of a new age of humanist geographical interest. Ptolemy's influence on fifteenth-century literary and cartographical production is clear, though it should be noted that Strabo's *Geographia* also circulated in Italy from the early 1420s and that the two competing geographical models prompted considerable debate.³⁸ Whilst it is often assumed that humanists treated classical *auctores* as infallible authorities beyond reproach, with geographical texts this was not always the case.³⁹ At the Council of Florence, Flavio Biondo and Poggio Bracciolini extensively questioned Ethiopian delegates on matters of African geography; the latter was later to record the travels of Niccolò de' Conti in his *De varietate fortunae* (1447). Older eyewitness accounts of the East also circulated in humanist circles, with Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* enthusiastically read by the circle of Paolo Toscanelli and Nicholas of Cusa.⁴⁰

The *Book*, too, was read in similar contexts. In addition to prominent individual readers, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Mandeville continued to circulate at courts associated with humanist learning.⁴¹ This was particularly the case at Ferrara, where successive generations of Este dukes had nurtured a strong interest in the world beyond the borders of Latin Christendom and constructed one of the most comprehensive libraries of geographical material in the whole of Europe.⁴² Occasionally, printed copies of the *Book* can also be found in alongside classical works in contemporary compilations (although it would be inadvisable to draw

³⁷ See Theodore Cachey, 'Between Text and Territory: Boccaccio's *De montibus*', in Victoria Kirkham, Michael Scherberg and Janet Smarr eds., *Boccaccio: a Critical Guide to the Complete Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 273-82, and Ernest H. Wilkins, 'The Genealogy of the Editions of the *Genealogia Deorum*', *Modern Philology* 17, 8 (1919), 425-38.

³⁸ Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*, pp. 139-40.

³⁹ Marica Milanese, 'La rinascita della geografia dell'Europa, 1350-1480', in Sergio Gensini ed., *Europa e Mediterraneo fra Medioevo e prima Età Moderna. L'osservatorio italiano* (Pisa: Pacini, 1992), pp. 35-60 (p. 49).

⁴⁰ O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 170-1.

⁴¹ The *Book* is one of the thirty-seven texts catalogued in the Codex Atlanticus. Leonardo appears to mimic Mandeville's descriptive style in his description of Mount Taurus in the same manuscript; see Chapter 3.

⁴² For the *Book*'s circulation in this context, see Chapter 3.

conclusions based on this fact alone).⁴³ In spite of this, the influence of Mandeville on scholarly geographical thought in Italy is difficult to discern. Serious geographical and historical treatises, such as Enea Silvio Piccolomini's *De Asia* (1461) and Foresti da Bergamo's *Supplementum chronicarum* (1483) make no reference to Mandeville (although, as this chapter will later explore, Piccolomini was apparently familiar with the *Book*). Unlike the accounts of Polo and Odoric, both of which exerted a considerable influence on cartographic production, there is little evidence that the *Book* was used as a source for either traditional or Ptolemaic world maps.

Assuming that those with a specialist interest in geography were aware of Mandeville – which seems reasonable, given the *Book*'s not insignificant manuscript circulation in northern Italy and its wider dissemination in Europe – we must ask what it was about the text that differentiated it from Polo and Odoric in the eyes of scholarly readers. One factor is surely the limited dissemination of the Vulgate redaction in the peninsula: the few Latin manuscripts that can be linked with Italy are universally associated with religious contexts, whilst there is little evidence to suggest an Italian readership for the Latin editions of the *Book* printed in northern Europe. A further reason for the lukewarm humanist reception of the *Book* is the very nature of the text. Larner's assessment of the *Book* as a 'travel romance' is perhaps oversimplistic, since several studies have underlined the multiplicity of ways in which readers approached the text; yet the *Book* is undeniably far more marvellous in nature than many comparable travel accounts.⁴⁴ The reliability of sources was of great concern to humanist geographers, who sought out only the most accurate information. In his account of Conti's travels, Poggio Bracciolini cast doubt over the veracity of both ancient and modern descriptions of India, stating that some were 'more similar to fable than to the truth'.⁴⁵ In some instances, Mandeville appears to have been deliberately eschewed in favour of other, less fantastical authors. The famous world map of Fra Mauro, produced around 1450 at the Camaldolensian monastery of San Michele di Murano in Venice, is one such example. Fra Mauro's cartography shows

⁴³ For example, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana Inc X . 224 is a contemporary compilation containing the *De situ orbis* of Dionysius Periegetes, Solinus' *De mirabilibus mundi* and a copy of the *Book*'s Venetian edition of 1500.

⁴⁴ Larner, 'Plucking Hairs from the Great Cham's Beard', p. 145.

⁴⁵ '[...] fabulis quam vero esse similia' (*Asia* IV, 9) Poggio also stated that Niccolò was the first traveller to penetrate beyond the Ganges. Meera Juncu has argued that this is not a sign of his ignorance of other travellers, but rather a part of his rhetorical strategy to bestow 'greatness' on his own age. See Juncu, *India in the Italian Renaissance: Visions of a Contemporary Pagan World 1300-1600* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 76-7.

clear signs of humanist influence; he may have had contact with his order's sister house of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, where figures including Leonardo Bruni and Paolo Toscanelli met to discuss geographical matters in the 1430s.⁴⁶ Alongside classical sources such as Pliny, Pomponius Mela and Ptolemy, he also consulted the accounts of Marco Polo and the recently returned Conti, who are described in the map's legends as 'i marinari experti'.⁴⁷ No direct mention is made of Mandeville, nor is there any suggestion of the influence of the *Book* on the map itself.

Given that Fra Mauro consulted a vast range of sources in constructing his map and that the *Book* is known to have circulated in Venice at his time, Mandeville's absence is less likely to be a case of oversight than a deliberate exclusion. An indication of the reasons for this can be seen in the persistent emphasis Fra Mauro placed on his aversion to the marvellous in the map's legends. A number of standard medieval tropes concerning the eastern world – such as the enclosure of Gog and Magog and the existence of the monstrous races – are refuted on the basis of a lack of reliable eyewitness evidence.⁴⁸ The expunging of marvellous elements is particularly evident in legends accompanying the islands of the Indian Ocean, where reports of monstrous creatures are denied on the grounds that they are 'quasi incredibili'.⁴⁹ The gold-digging ants of Taprobane receive particular attention:

Alguni scriveno che in queste Indie sono molte diversità de monstri sì de homeni come de animali, ma perché a queste cosse pochi dano fede qui non ne faço nota, salvo che pur à certo de alcuni animali, come sono serpe le qual se dice haver vii teste. Ancora de qui sono formige grandissime e quasi che qui dir non ardisco pareno cani. Questo può esser che'l sia specie de animali che sia simile a le formige.⁵⁰

The ants, originally reported by Herodotus, are referred to in various forms in medieval accounts of India, although it is interesting to note that here their precise

⁴⁶ Edison, *The World Map*, pp. 132-33, 141.

⁴⁷ Edison, *The World Map*, p. 153.

⁴⁸ See Andrew Gow, 'Fra Mauro's World View: Authority and Empirical Evidence on a Venetian Mappamundi', in P. Harvey ed., *The Hereford World Map: Medieval World Maps and their Context* (London: The British Library, 2006), pp. 405-14.

⁴⁹ Piero Falchetta, *Fra Mauro's World Map* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 339.

⁵⁰ Falchetta, *Fra Mauro's World Map*, p. 325.

location and comparison with dogs is identical to their description by Mandeville.⁵¹ Such evidence alone is insufficient to suggest that Fra Mauro is referring directly to the *Book*, but it gives an indication of the low standing of marvellous accounts of the East among scholarly geographers.

Giovanni da Fontana's *De omnibus rebus naturalibus* (c. 1454)

On the few occasions in which Mandeville is directly referenced by Italian cartographers and geographers, a similar pattern can be observed of its representation primarily as a book of marvels rather than a serious geographical text. This is the case in the *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus quae continentur in mundo*, written in around 1454 by the Venetian engineer and physician Giovanni da Fontana (c. 1395-c. 1455).⁵² A contemporary of Fra Mauro, Giovanni had studied at the University of Padua in the 1410s under Blasius of Parma and Paul of Venice. Although he pursued a medical career, becoming *medico condotto* of Udine in 1438, he had wide-ranging interests that encompassed mathematics, mechanics and astronomy, evidenced by an expansive literary corpus that includes treatises on the construction of clocks, military engines and even the possibility of artificial memory. Composed towards the end of Giovanni's life, the *Liber* is a cosmographical treatise that purports to describe all things 'celestial, terrestrial and mathematical' and 'the angels and movers of the heavens'.⁵³ The range of classical, medieval and contemporary sources referenced – from Ptolemy to Conti, via Pliny, Strabo, Polo and Odoric – demonstrates both Giovanni's erudition and the extent of his engagement with the geographical material available to him. O'Doherty has noted Giovanni's attempts to organize his sources to

⁵¹ Herodotus himself specifically states that the ants are not as large as dogs. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 212: 'Now, in the sand of this desert there are ants which are bigger than foxes, although they never reach the size of dogs [...] These ants make their nests underground, and in doing so they bring sand up to the surface in exactly the same way that ants do in Greece [...] and the sand which is brought up to the surface has gold in it'.

⁵² For Fontana and the *Liber*, see Lynn Thorndike, 'An Unidentified Work by Giovanni da Fontana: *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*', *Isis* 15 (1931), 31-46. For more recent discussions, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, 'Les représentations de l'espace en Occident de l'Antiquité tardive au XVI^e siècle' in *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études: Section des sciences historiques et philologiques*, 141 (2011), 97-108; O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 285-89; and Christine Gadrat-Querfelli, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen-Âge*, pp. 264-85.

⁵³ First published in Venice by Octavian Scot under the name of Pompilius Azalus of Piacenza as *Liber Pompilii Azali, Placentini, de omnibus rebus naturalibus quae continentur in mundo; videlicet coelestibus et terrestribus necnon mathematicis et de angelis motoribus quae coelorum* (1544). Although no known manuscripts of the work survive, Lynn Thorndike proved that Fontana was the true author. See Thorndike, 'An Unidentified Work by Giovanni da Fontana'.

‘distinguish between past and present cosmological ideas and modes of spatial representation’, with the medieval *mappamundi* tradition rejected in favour of the Ptolemaic model of cartography and the testimony of eyewitness accounts.⁵⁴ As this section will explore, Giovanni’s engagement with the *Book* reflects this broader pattern, although it also highlights some tensions within his schema.

Mandeville occupies an intriguing position both within Giovanni’s discussion of geographical ideas and the *Liber* as a whole. The *Book* is an important source for the fourth and fifth books in particular, the former a description of the habitable world based on the Ptolemaic model, and the latter dealing largely with *mirabilia*. It is clear from Giovanni’s citations that he had access to a Latin version of the *Book*, as well as a copy of Odoric’s *Itinerarium* that referred to Mandeville.⁵⁵ In book four, Sir John is introduced as a ‘vigorous, most educated and no less devout knight, who travelled every single part of the East and faithfully recorded it,’ in terms that emphasize his reliability as an eyewitness observer.⁵⁶ The following passage, a description of the Earthly Paradise, is based on material that Mandeville claims was reported to him by reliable sources. Giovanni ends the chapter by calling Sir John’s status as a reliable observer into question:

The English knight stated this in his book. He did not say where he heard about the state of Paradise, who he was with, and with which holy brothers of minor orders he travelled through those parts. Perhaps some of these things were revealed to him through angelic revelation.⁵⁷

Whilst it is somewhat unclear whether the suggestion that Sir John received knowledge of the Earthly Paradise through divine revelation is entirely serious, Giovanni’s reflections reveal a circumspect attitude towards the *Book* as a source. A similar pattern can be observed in the following chapter, in which Giovanni considers the existence of the Antipodes. In contrast to Mandeville’s positive assertion,

⁵⁴ O’Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, p. 286. As O’Doherty notes, this is in complete contrast to Fra Mauro’s rejection of the Ptolemaic model, and suggests a contemporary debate as to the most appropriate way of making maps.

⁵⁵ Gadrat concludes that Fontana similarly used Francesco Pipino’s Latin redaction of Polo’s account.

⁵⁶ Fontana, *Liber*, q3^r: ‘Haec omnia concepit Ioannes anglicus miles strenuus atque eruditissimus et non minus devotus, qui partes fere omnes orientales peregit, et ita fideliter scripsit anno gratiae .M.cccclx.

⁵⁷ Fontana, *Liber*, q3^r: ‘Ita expressit Miles anglicus in libro quem condidit, non aut dicta a quo haec de paradisi statu audiverit. Cum enim devotus existeret et cum quibusdam sanctis fratribus ordinis minoris eas partes meavit. Ab illis fortasse aliqua angelica revelatione eisdem facta potuit intellexisse’.

Giovanni aligns himself with the Augustinian position: scripture gives no false information, and since God created only one Adam it follows that any southern continent would not be populated. Although he states that he would change his opinion if presented with convincing evidence, it is clear that the *Book* does not offer this:

Not all that appears to be gold is gold... I judge that famous knight to be eager for the knowledge of new and great things, as it is in the nature of those who travel the world to believe.⁵⁸

Patrick Gautier Dalché has argued that this moment represents a turning point in the *Liber*'s assessment of Sir John, who is seen no longer as a traveller motivated by religious concerns but rather as a credulous reporter of marvels.⁵⁹ Further to this, in both of the above passages Giovanni's doubts concerning Mandeville's accuracy are related to the reporting of unconfirmed information, which comes in the first instance from secondhand reports and in the second from conjecture. As such, they reveal how the *Book* failed to conform to the new geographical standard of eyewitness observation.

If Giovanni struggles to fit Mandeville within the framework of the *Liber*'s fourth book, he has no such difficulties in finding material for the *mirabilia* of book five. Here Mandeville is used alongside Polo and Odoric, sources that, as Christine Gadrat-Ouerfelli notes, Fontana here treats as equally valid.⁶⁰ Indeed, in some instances Giovanni prefers Mandeville to his peers. The chapters concerning the Great Khan drawn first and foremost on the *Book*, with supporting evidence taken from other accounts: Giovanni states that 'John the Englishman, illuminator of the East, and Marco, Odoric and others attest that there is no less than what is told of the Empire of the Great Khan'.⁶¹ Mandeville is also a key source for the description of

⁵⁸ Fontana, *Liber*, q4^r: 'Non omne quod aurum apparet aurum est. Facile est credere, difficile est scire, sed facillimum ignorare: iudico illum famosum militem sciendi res novas et grandes avidum ut mos est, et natura eorum qui mundum vagantur credere...'

⁵⁹ Patrick Gautier Dalché, 'Les représentations de l'espace en Occident de l'Antiquité tardive au XVI^e siècle', *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études: Section des sciences historiques et philologiques*, 141 (2011), 97-108, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Gadrat-Ouerfelli, *Lire Marco Polo au Moyen-Âge*, p. 285.

⁶¹ Fontana, *Liber*, f. 115^v: 'Cuius imperium, ut ait Ioannes anglicus orientalium partium illustrator et Marcus, Odoricus et alii testantur, dici non debet nec est minus quod de imperio magni kan relatum est'.

the kingdom of Prester John and is used to provide detail on other standard *mirabilia*, including precious stones and the islands of the Indian Ocean, with reference made to Mandeville's comment that in Ceylon the sea appears to hang from the clouds.⁶² The use of the *Book* in this section of the *Liber* is not limited to geographical information. Giovanni also borrows from passages concerning the life of Mohammed, Muslim morality and pagan religious customs in India. Notably, here Mandeville's authority goes almost entirely unchallenged, and the *Book* is even used to support the observations of ancient *auctores*, as is the case where Giovanni confirms Pliny's description of mountains of gold and silver by referring to Mandeville's islands of Orille and Argite.⁶³

Giovanni's treatment of Mandeville offers a remarkable insight into his evaluation of the *Book* as a cosmographical work. On the one hand, the relevance of the *Book* as a source for serious geographical discussion is called into question on the grounds of its inclusion of unverified information. However, Mandeville's voice remains very much present throughout the *Liber*, in dialogue with both contemporary and ancient sources. Giovanni's inclusion of the *Book* in spite of its irrelevance in the face of the Ptolemaic model is indicative of a broader tension in the *Liber* between two distinct geographical traditions. Whilst to the modern eye this might appear deliberately anachronistic, there is further evidence that the medieval *imago mundi* represented by the *Book* continued to survive at the margins of the new geography.

Nicolaus Germanus and the Nordenskiöld map (c. 1460)

Mandeville's influence on cartographical production in Italy is almost indiscernible, a fact that may be attributed to the trend for Ptolemaic maps, which were supplemented only by details taken from the most reliable of more recent accounts. Nevertheless, there are occasional glimpses of the *Book*'s influence on Italian cartography.⁶⁴ The peripheral nature of Mandeville in relation to the predominant model is perhaps best demonstrated by the only known Ptolemaic manuscript produced in Italy to carry any

⁶² Fontana, *Liber*, 121^r.

⁶³ Fontana, *Liber*, 121^v.

⁶⁴ One such case is Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario* (1528), an example of the Venetian trend for illustrated island books. Although Bordone relies chiefly on Marco Polo, some of his maps reveal evidence of Mandeville's influence; for example, the island of Dondin is shown to the south of Scillam, a detail present only in the *Book*. See Thomas Suarez, *Early Mapping of Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Periplus, 1999), p. 120.

reference to the *Book*. Now part of the A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection in the National Library of Finland, the manuscript in question was produced in northern Italy in the early 1460s in the workshop of the German cartographer Nicolaus Germanus, who lived and worked in Rome, Ferrara and Florence.⁶⁵ Chet Van Duzer has established that the manuscript belongs to Germanus' first recension, produced between 1460 and 1466, and furthermore closely resembles three others within this recension. This subgroup is characterized by the complete absence of the text of the *Geographia*, with a relatively sober material form suggesting that the maps were commissioned by less wealthy patrons.⁶⁶ Even within this group, the Nordenskiöld manuscript is unique since it contains a set of additional legends of marvellous nature that derive from three principal sources: Pliny's *Historia naturalis*, Andrea da Barberino's *Guerrin meschino* and the *Book*. Van Duzer interprets these legends as representative of an interest on the part of either cartographer or client that 'alters the textual character of the maps, tilting it from a Ptolemaic mathematical sobriety to a palpable excitement with the wonders of the world'.⁶⁷

Of the two legends taken from Mandeville, one is a brief reference to the tribes of Gog and Magog. More significant, however, is a longer legend concerning the island of Taprobane:

Verso le parte orientale di là da le parte de le terre del priete Janni venna grande ixola e bono reame, chiamata Taprobana. Questa ixola è bono reame et è uno paese molto bono et nobile et fructuosa. Il re di quella è molto richo. Quelli del paese fano sempre uno re per eleçone, ma tuta via questo re obedisce el preste Janni. In questo paese sono doe estate e doi inverni, et ivi se semina doe volte l'anno biade et de ogni altre cose. Li giardini sonno sempre verdi e fioriti. Ivi dimora bona gente, ivi sono molti christiani che sonno molto richi che non sanno quanto habiano antiquamente, quando nele nave antiqui se

⁶⁵ MS Misc. 1. For documentary evidence of Germanus' origins as a Benedictine monk at the monastery of Reichenbach and subsequent life in Italy, see Lorenz Böniger, 'Don Niccolò Germano e Arrigo Martello: due cartografi tedeschi nella Firenze del Quattrocento', *Geostorie* 21 (2013), 9-20.

⁶⁶ Chet Van Duzer, 'Bring on the Monsters and Marvels: Non-Ptolemaic Legends on Manuscript Maps of Ptolemy's *Geography*', *Viator* 45, 2 (2014), 303-334, p. 305-7. Joseph Fischer's division of Nicolaus' manuscripts into three recensions is almost universally accepted. See *Claudii Ptolomaei Geographiae codex Urbinas Graecus* 82 (Leiden and Leipzig: J. Fischer, 1932).

⁶⁷ Van Duzer, 'Bring on the Monsters and Marvels', p. 325.

andaua de là. Ivi sonno oro argento e petre preciosse.⁶⁸

A closer reading of the legend shows that it has been copied almost verbatim from the text of a manuscript of Group β , which the scribe likely had to hand. The only alteration is made to the final line, where the description of the crossing to Taprobane from the Land of Prester John is curtailed by a generic expression of wealth ('ivi sonno oro argento e petre preciosse'). This underlines the notion that Mandeville's inclusion is one of deliberate exoticization, intended to enliven the standard Ptolemaic maps in line with the interests of a specific patron. The inclusion of legends from the *Guerrin meschino* alongside those from the *Book* is of particular interest, suggesting that Nicolaus and his workshop considered Mandeville, like the romance epic, to have greater entertainment value than any real geographical significance. Like Fontana's *Liber*, the Nordenskiöld map indicates that the *Book* continued to exert a limited influence at the periphery of geographical thought, moderating the dominant Ptolemaic model with exotic *mirabilia*.

A limited legacy?

The opening up of the world to Europe at the end of the fifteenth century was to change the fortunes of the *Book* in Italy, with affordable printed editions becoming immensely popular with a broad readership. However, there is little to suggest that this had any affect on the *Book*'s intellectual standing: the changing nature of geography and increasingly detailed reports of the East (and West) appear to have rendered Mandeville irrelevant to readers with a scholarly geographical interest. This trend is exemplified by the exclusion of the *Book* from Giovan Battista Ramusio's monumental *Navigazioni et viaggi*, a three-volume compendium of travel texts published in Venice between 1550 and 1606.⁶⁹ Alongside the more recent reports of travellers such as Ludovico da Varthema, Sebastian Cabot and Fernando Cortez, Ramusio included Marco Polo and Odoric, both published in the second volume. Mandeville's absence from this pantheon might therefore be interpreted as a statement of Venetian patriotism, but there are also indications that Ramusio had discounted the

⁶⁸ Helsinki, National Library of Finland, A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection MS Misc. 1, pl. Asia 12.

⁶⁹ For a modern edition of the text with thorough introductory notes, see Marica Milanese ed., *Navigazioni e viaggi* vols. I-IV (Turin: Einaudi, 1978-81).

Book as a trustworthy source years before he published his *magnum opus*. In the preface to *Il viaggio fatto da gli spagniuoli a torno a'l mondo*, an edition of Antonio Pigafetta's account that he prepared for Niccolò Zoppino in 1536, Ramusio praises Magellan's circumnavigation and its value for human knowledge, stating that it has superseded the return of Xenophon from Babylon to the Black Sea and Nearchus' navigation of the Indus.⁷⁰ Although this may be a simple rhetorical device intended to confirm the value of the edition, Ramusio's critical appraisal of other recent travellers is revealing:

Lasciamo stare i viaggi scritti da moderni, cio è Marco Polo et Mandavilla, i quali sono scoperti essere in gran parte favole, di questo fatto per il Capitan Magaglianes se ne ha, et ogni giorno se ne havera maggior notitia, et fermezza della verita.⁷¹

That Ramusio reformulated his opinion of Polo is demonstrated by his inclusion of the *Devisement* in his *Navigazioni*, along with a preface explaining that recent reports and newly translated Arabic texts have confirmed the Venetian traveller's veracity.⁷² Mandeville, however, was to retain his label of unreliability, as evidenced by the absence of references to the *Book* in the geographical literature of the sixteenth century. However, as the final section of this chapter will explore, the aspect of the *Book* that most damaged its standing amongst erudite geographers – its marvellous nature – was to become one of the key factors in its astonishing success as a popular printed work.

The *Book* in print

With no fewer than eighty-one printed editions produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the *Book* has often been described as an early-modern bestseller. Although in every sense a European phenomenon, it was above all in Italy that the *Book*'s early

⁷⁰ Theodore Cachey Jr. ed., *The First Voyage Around the World (1519-1522)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. xlvii.

⁷¹ Preface to *Il viaggio fatto da gli spagniuoli a torno a'l mondo* (Venice: 1536), aa3r.

⁷² Simon Gaunt, *Marco Polo's Le Devisement du monde: Narrative Voice, Language and Diversity* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013), pp. 74-75.

print success was most marked.⁷³ Italian interest in the Spanish and Portuguese discoveries has often been demonstrated with reference to the print production of accounts of the New World, such as Fracanzio da Montalboddo's *Paesi nuovamente ritrovati* (1507), an influential compilation that was printed six times in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. Yet it is clear that alongside these contemporary reports the *Book* continued to make a central contribution to Italy's imagination of the East. Mandeville's success did not go unnoticed by printers of other medieval accounts of Asia who, much like today's publishers, recognized that association with a bestseller could stand other works in good stead. The Latin edition of Odoric's *Itinerarium* printed by Girolamo Soncino at Pesaro in 1513 includes references to Mandeville and Polo in its dedicatory letter.⁷⁴ Similarly, as the previous chapter has examined, the *Book* exerted an important influence on the paratextual presentation of a wide range of other travel accounts. This section will explore the ways in which this dynamic commercial climate continued to shape the Italian version of the *Book* and its printed form.

Geography, marvels and the New World

As the opening chapter of this study has discussed, da Corneno's first Italian edition of the *Book* did much to underscore its credentials as a source of information on the eastern world. In addition to a title identifying it as a 'treatise on the most marvellous and notable things to be found throughout the world', he added a series of chapter headings that emphasized the text's marvellous content whilst downplaying its value as a pilgrimage account. This privileging of the second half of the *Book* marks an abrupt departure from the general pattern in early editions elsewhere in Europe, which continued to represent it explicitly as a pilgrimage text.⁷⁵

Regardless of whether Pietro was motivated to present the *Book* in this way in anticipation of its commercial success, it is interesting to note that the *princeps*' closest manuscript relative, MiA, also displays a clear interest in the *Book*'s geographical value.

⁷³ On this, see Chapter 1.

⁷⁴ Lucio Monaco and Giulio Cesare Testa eds, *Odorichus de rebus incognitis. Odorico da Pordenone nella prima edizione a stampa del 1513* (Pordenone: Camera di commercio di Pordenone, 1986), p. 39: 'Scripsit tamen et Marcus Paulus venetus, cum legatione venetorum profectus, aliqua diversa certe ab istis; similiter Ioannes de Media Villa, viri novi'.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 1.

Produced in 1478 in the town of Appiano Gentile by Bernardo Lanzavecchia, a grammar school teacher, the manuscript also includes the Latin *Itinerarium* of Odoric of Pordenone and the *Letter of Prester John*. The prominence of the *Book* within this compendium is indicated by the inclusion of a table of contents that comprehensively divides its geographical material, headed with a rubric that describes it as a ‘*tabula regionarii de mirabilibus mundi*’.⁷⁶ Bernardo’s statement that he personally divided the text into individual chapters, as well as his provision of individual page references, indicates a close reading of the text and a desire to facilitate reference to individual passages. Whilst there is no clear correlation between Bernardo’s headings and those of the *editio princeps*, it is notable that they share a number of key features, particularly a concern with the identification of regions and cities, which are often listed within headings, as well as individual topographical features and their dimensions.

However, discernible differences between the two sets of headings point towards an erudite geographical interest on the part of Bernardo, which contrasts with a popularizing tendency in Pietro’s *princeps*. Where the headings of MiA closely follow the *Book*’s itinerary by highlighting routes between individual cities, Pietro’s edition tends to represent locations in isolation. Both sets of headings pay increasing attention to the proliferation of marvellous material in the second half of the *Book*, yet unlike Bernardo, who situates these in individual geographical contexts, Pietro consistently emphasizes marvellous content over geographical indicators. Perhaps the most telling example of this is the passage in which Mandeville advocates the sphericity of the earth, arguing from astronomical reasoning, scriptural evidence for the centrality of Jerusalem, and an anecdote concerning a traveller who unwittingly circumnavigates the globe. Whilst the headings in MiA draw attention to the first two, more authoritative proofs, the *princeps* refers only to the story of the traveller, making no reference to the sphericity of the earth or Mandeville’s broader argument.⁷⁷

Other editions produced around the turn of the sixteenth century reveal that Italian printers increasingly situated the *Book* within the context of the Portuguese and

⁷⁶ Fol. 101r: ‘Incipit liber seu tabula regionarii de mirabilibus mundi visis et diligenter examinatis per dominum Iohanem de Mandavila militem sacratum templum sancti Johannis Rhodi de capitulo in capitulum distinctus per me Bernardum Lanzaveggia gra[mmaticae] professore[m]’. This is followed by: ‘Questa sie la tavola di questo libro chiamato regionario, nel quale si trovarà le sue rubriche et hystorie ordinate de capitulo in capitulo et de foglio in foglio’.

⁷⁷ MiA fol. 105v: ‘Como per la rotundita de la terra li indiani sono antiposti a nuy et hano nocte quando nuy havemo el di et converso’; fol. 106r: ‘Como Ierusalem e nel mezo di la terra dise David et apparatus est salutem in medio terre’. M1 fol. I2v: ‘De uno che andò cercando il mondo e ritrovuose in paese dove se parlava in sua lingua’.

Spanish discoveries. The Florentine edition printed in 1492 by Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri was the first to alter the title introduced in the *princeps*, removing references to any specific location beyond ‘tutte le parti del mondo habitabili’. The woodcut frontispiece – the first to be included in an Italian edition – shows a mounted king and his retinue being greeted by a sage, who bears a book.⁷⁸ This scene contrasts markedly with the frontispieces of other early European editions of the *Book*, which make specific reference to the text’s religious content and Sir John’s pilgrim status.⁷⁹ This representation of Mandeville as part of the new breed of global traveller appears to have been in line with Morgiani and Petri’s broader commercial strategy. In October 1493, the pair published Giuliano Dati’s verse translation of Columbus’ letter following his first voyage, the *Lettera delle isole nuovamente trovate*; a companion piece also by Dati, *La gran magnificientia del Prete Gianni o Primo cantare dell’India*, was also issued around the same date.⁸⁰ Along with the *Book*, these works form a distinct subgroup in Morgiani and Petri’s corpus, which was otherwise limited to vernacular religious works and verse romance. Moreover, these three texts were the only works published by the pair before 1495 to include frontispieces depicting a secular scene. As Chapter 5 will explore in greater detail, the image of Prester John produced for the third work owes much to the *Book*’s description of the prelate, and indicates the extent to which medieval accounts and contemporary reports circulated in conjunction.

Even clearer evidence of the visual approximation between the *Book* and New World texts is provided by the output of the da Legnano family of editors in Milan in the first decade of the sixteenth century.⁸¹ Giovanni da Legnano was a paper merchant, editor and bookseller who had been active in the city from around 1480. His production consisted primarily of Latin historical and juridical works that appeared on school and university syllabuses, but these were occasionally interspersed with more popular vernacular editions. One example of this is the edition of the *Book* that Giovanni commissioned from Pietro Martire da Mantegazza in June 1502, published as *Questo sie el libro de Iohanne de Mandavilla*. Such a generic title

⁷⁸ This is in fact taken from an edition of the *Fiore di virtù* published in Florence in 1491, attributed to Jacopo di Carlo. Florentine frontispieces of this time were generally representative of a text’s content.

⁷⁹ Even in the German editions of Anton Sorg, which contain numerous illustrations of Eastern marvels and monstrosities, the title pages bear an image of Sir John with a cross on his forehead that marks him as a pilgrim.

⁸⁰ For both texts, see Leonardo Olschki, ‘I “Cantari dell’India” di Giuliano Dati’, *La Bibliofilia* 40 (1938), 291-95.

⁸¹ For a detailed study of the da Legnano family, see Guido Sutermeister, *Gli editori “da Legnano”, 1475-1525*, 2 vols. (Varese: Tipografia Arcivescovile dell’Addolorata, 1946-48).

gives a sense of the *Book*'s standing in Milan, where it had been published three times in 1496 and 1497 by Ulrich Scinzenzeler, a printer with whom Giovanni had collaborated extensively. Rather than giving the usual lengthy title, Giovanni instead opted to use the title page to display an original woodcut frontispiece, depicting two armies each with an enthroned king, on either side of a river that is crossed by two bridges. In the background a walled city sits on the banks of the sea, which is crossed by numerous caravels. This particular type of ship was used extensively by the Portuguese and Spanish and became a visual *leitmotif* in printed accounts of their voyages, appearing in the earliest editions of Columbus and Vespucci. It is of further interest that the bridges in the foreground conform to contemporary artistic trends in the depiction of Chinese architecture.⁸² The same woodcut was reused by Giovanni's son, Giovanni Giacomo da Legnano, for his Milanese edition of the *Paesi nuovamente ritrovato* published in 1508 and reprinted in 1512 and 1519; it later appeared, this time in pirated form, on a Milanese version of the *Book* published in 1517. Giovanni's presentation of the *Book* is therefore situated firmly within the visual culture of the discoveries, but such reuse also demonstrates the extent to which the popular representation of contemporary exploration was influenced by late medieval notions of the East. Although scholarly geographers may have distinguished between late medieval and contemporary travellers, it was highly convenient for Italian printers to market them in precisely the same way.⁸³

Authority and credibility

Alongside the emphasizing of its marvellous content, Italian editions of the *Book* also show evidence of a clear concern with textual reliability. As increasing contact with the wider world began to affect longstanding paradigms, aspects of the medieval worldview that underpinned the *Book* were problematized. At the same time, the growing prominence of travel accounts within the print market encouraged printers to present the texts that they published as accurate and authoritative. On the whole, it is

⁸² Leonardo Olschki, *Storia letteraria delle scoperte geografiche. Studi e ricerche* (Florence: Olschki, 1937), p. 44.

⁸³ The repositioning of medieval accounts in light of recent discoveries was not limited to Mandeville alone. The title page of Paolo Danza's 1533 edition of Marco Polo, for example, promises to describe '[...] el mondo novo et isole et lochi incogniti et silvestri abbondanti et sterili et dove abonda l'oro et argento et zoglie et pietre preciose [...] et dove manzano carne humana'.

this second kind of concern that is most clearly visible in the Italian print corpus. The standard title introduced by Pietro da Corneno underscores the value of the text, with the prospective reader promised ‘perfecta cognitione’ of eastern regions, peoples and customs, in contrast to other accounts that offer an incomplete picture or one that is described ‘più confusamente’. Notably, Sir John’s status as an eyewitness reporter is underlined twice in the title, with a specific reference to the date of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In this context, the description of Sir John as a *cavalier a sperondoro* – a claim not made in the *Book* – is particularly interesting: the Order of the Golden Spur was often associated with counts palatine, figures of jurisdictional authority who were entitled to confer university degrees.⁸⁴ Such terminology would appear to add further credence to Mandeville’s knightly status. A similar concern with the authorial figure of Mandeville can be observed in the Florentine editions, whose unique title refers to the text as Tuscan and describes the author as ‘Giovanni Mandavilla franzese’. Since both the text and the standard title on the reverse of the same folio describe Sir John as English, this is unlikely to be a simple error; nor does it appear to be a reference to the *Book*’s original language of composition, as the Italian text gives this as a generic ‘volgare’. Given the status of French as a literary language, this might be interpreted as an attempt to imbue the *Book* with authority and associate it with a pan-European vernacular culture.

Evidence of a more fundamental engagement with the issue of authority, prompted perhaps by a critical response to the *Book*, can be found in the two editions published at Bologna in 1488. Their printer, Ugo Ruggeri, was a doctor of canon law who had moved to Bologna in 1471 to study at the university before quickly becoming involved in the nascent print industry. Much of his output comprised Latin legal texts produced for students, but his commercial nous is attested by his publication of a number of extremely popular vernacular works. Scholarly interest in Ptolemaic geography at Bologna did not preclude the circulation of similar marvellous, medieval texts, such as the apocryphal letter from Alexander to Aristotle, published in 1501 by Alessandro Achillini, a professor of medicine and philosophy.⁸⁵ The proximity of Ruggeri’s two editions of the *Book*, produced at the most six months

⁸⁴ Grendler, *Universities in the Italian Renaissance*, p. 184.

⁸⁵ Massimo Donattini, ‘Il mondo portato a Bologna: viaggiatori, collezionisti, missionari’, in Adriano Prosperi ed., *Storia di Bologna*, vol. III, *Bologna nell’età moderna (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2009), pp. 537-682.

apart, shows that the text met with immediate success; it would be printed twice more in the city within the decade. Nevertheless, an amendment made to the conclusion of Ruggerio's second edition suggests that some Bolognese readers were unwilling to accept the truth of Mandeville's account:

E ancora dicesi **omnia nova placent, cioe a dire** che tutte le cose nuove piaceno. Si che per tanto io ho fatto fine senza piu recontare de le cose stranie e diverse che se ritruovano ne le parte di la. E cio che io ho descritto de alcuno paese e tanto che de bastare. **E sapiate che quello che io ho descritto sie la propria veritade, come se fusse il sancto vangelio. Benche serano molti che non lo crederano.** Ma lasso el **giudicio** ad altrui che voglia andare di la, pero che molte altre cose trovarano da descrivere **e vederano si o dico il vero o no. Laus deo omnipotenti.**⁸⁶

Here, the narrative voice of Sir John is modified to deliver a staunch defence, radically altering the tone of the text. Comparison with the gospel underscores the veracity of Mandeville's account, whilst the claim that only those who are willing to follow in Sir John's footsteps may judge its accuracy is indicative of the value accorded to the text as an (alleged) eyewitness report. Ruggerio's amendment seems unlikely to have silenced many of his critics, but the fact that the *Book* was printed twice more in Bologna within the space of a decade suggests that veracity was not the primary concern of many of its readers.

Reading the marvellous

Like the surviving manuscripts, copies of the *Book* printed in Italy contain a wealth of evidence for reader response in the form of annotations and other marginalia.

Although this thesis discusses evidence for individuals' devotional readings and theological concerns elsewhere, there is overwhelming evidence that the majority of Italian readers approached the printed *Book* as a source of information on the marvels of the eastern world. Annotations, *manicula* and other forms of highlighting draw attention above all to the strange beasts, natural wonders and unusual peoples that

⁸⁶ B1, fol. k2^v. Ruggeri's additions are given here in bold.

inhabit Mandeville's Indies. Cross-references to other texts demonstrate that the *Book* was sometimes read alongside other medieval accounts of the East, particularly those of Polo and Odoric.⁸⁷ It was also found alongside reports of more recent discoveries, as is the case in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana It. VI 208, a compilation of travel texts produced between 1518 and 1520 by a Venetian Franciscan. Copied largely from editions printed in the city, the manuscript includes both medieval and more recent accounts: opening with Odoric and Polo, it is followed by a number of extracts from the compilation *Paesi nuovamente ritrovati*, including accounts of the voyages of Vasco da Gama, Columbus and Alvise da Ca' da Mosto. Nestled among these contemporary accounts is a series of extracts from the *Book*, relating almost exclusively to the marvels of the East. Many of the headings provided by the scribe are identical to those that appear in the Italian printed editions, but others draw attention to specific marvels, with a strong focus on both monstrous races and exotic animals.⁸⁸ The extracts themselves are paraphrases rather than direct quotations, with a discernible focus on marvellous content at the expense of geographical or devotional detail which the scribe evidently deemed to be irrelevant. Instances such as this provide a further indication of the degree to which popular interest in the discoveries was underpinned by a continuing fascination with the marvellous.

As the sixteenth century progressed, the *Book* was increasingly presented and approached as a popular text. From 1521, Venetian printers produced it solely in the cheap octavo format, using paper of relatively low quality and marketing it alongside other popular vernacular works. Mandeville's trajectory in Italy can be contrasted with that of Polo, whose account was printed throughout the sixteenth century both in octavo editions that emphasized its marvellous content and in Ramusio's scholarly compilation. Some readers, however, continued to approach the *Book* as a work of geographical value. Copenhagen, Royal Library Inc. 2618 contains a number of vernacular annotations in a sixteenth-century hand that show a developed interest in the text's geographical content, with a series of page references in the opening folios that draw attention to the islands of Orille and Argite, the city of Quinsai ('la più gran

⁸⁷ See for example Rome, BAV Inc. IV. 263 (Florence: Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri, 1492), which also contains evidence that the *Book* was read alongside Hayton of Armenia's *Fleur des histoires d'Orient*.

⁸⁸ The headings are duplicated in a chapter table on fols. 6^v-7^v.

città che sia nel mondo') and the centrality of Jerusalem.⁸⁹ Venice, Biblioteca Marciana 163 D.207.2, originally conserved in the library of the Franciscan convent of St Bonaventure, is a compilation in contemporary binding that situates the 1567 Mandeville between Matteo Pagano's editions of the accounts of Polo (1555) and Ludovico da Varthema (c.1550).⁹⁰ The majority of readers at this time, however, had a more generic interest in eastern *mirabilia*. This is the case in two manuscripts that circulated after the last Italian edition of the *Book* was printed in 1567. MoS, produced at an unknown date but still circulating in 1573, contains numerous marginal manicha that, in addition to drawing attention to religious practice, systematically mark references to the marvels of the Indies. Particular attention is paid to the monstrous races, which are individually highlighted, as well as natural features, such as the double seasons of Taprobane, and descriptions of unusual animals. A similar interest is discernible in Lucca, Biblioteca Governativa MS 304, which contains an abridged version of the Italian text in a compilation of Latin and vernacular texts produced by a single scribe in the 1590s.⁹¹ Much material from the first half of the *Book* is redacted, with little information on the Mediterranean and an abbreviated description of the Holy Land. The second half of the *Book*, however, is given in relatively full form, suggesting greater interest on the part of the scribe. This is confirmed by the presence of annotations in the scribal hand in the second half of the text, including a reference to Mandeville's claim that the river Gion (the Nile) is named after the Ethiopian word for 'murky' and a cross reference to the account of Marco Polo. The range of material contained within the manuscript reflects the scribe's broad interests, but it is particularly noteworthy that the opening text (which directly precedes the abridged *Book*) is a Latin relation of natural scientific observations composed by a follower of the Bolognese naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) during his travels in northern Italy.⁹² This juxtaposition is indicative of a

⁸⁹ Fol. a1^v-a2^r. Other annotations reveal a staunchly conservative attitude towards the *Book*'s portrayal of non-Latin Christianity; see Chapter 5.

⁹⁰ Huntington Library Rare Books 101128 also shows considerable evidence of similar sixteenth-century engagement with geographical aspects of the *Book*. The annotations have, however, been washed out and are only visible under ultraviolet light; to date, I have been unable to consult the copy in person.

⁹¹ The abridged version of the *Book* is immediately followed by notes on the history of prominent Lucchese families up to the year 1593; the manuscript also contains an account of the death of Urban VII in 1590. For further detail, see Appendix.

⁹² Fol. 1^r-25^r, marked in a later index as 'Relazione (latina) di cose notevoli in scienze naturali ecc. viste in Mantova e in altre città da un anonimo, discepolo di Ulisse Aldrovandi'.

specific, growing interest in Mandeville that will be explored in the remainder of this chapter.

From collections to natural history

The early years of the sixteenth century witnessed the emergence of a new trend in European intellectual circles. The burgeoning culture of collection, which was especially prevalent in Italy, established the practice of gathering and preserving naturalia, artefacts and books in an effort to better understand the world. This ‘broad cultural trend to normalize the marvellous’ was particularly prevalent in Italy, and especially in the university towns of Bologna, Padua and Pisa.⁹³ The underlying principles of collection were by no means entirely original, and indeed there are strong similarities with the medieval encyclopaedic tradition, of which the *Book* itself can be understood to be a part. Geraldine Heng has observed how medieval travel narrative preceded and instigated this fashion, arguing that Mandeville particular ‘replicates narrative itself as a collection’.⁹⁴ It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the *Book* is known to have circulated among Italian collectors. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS D 46 inf. was owned in the sixteenth century by the botanist and bibliophile Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, whose library was amongst the largest in Europe.⁹⁵ Although the manuscript presents few discernible traces of Pinelli’s reading, a reference to Odoric’s *Itinerarium* in his hand shows that he was familiar with both texts.⁹⁶

Further evidence of the association of Mandeville with the culture of collection can be found in two satirical letters published by the poet and philosopher Giovanni Filoteo Achillini (d. 1538), a member of a circle of avid collectors in

⁹³ Paula Finden, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 22.

⁹⁴ Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 248.

⁹⁵ On Pinelli’s library, see in particular Marcella Grendler, ‘A Greek Collection in Padua: the Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535-1601)’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 33, 3 (1980), 386-416, and Angela Nuovo, ‘The Creation and Dispersal of the Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli’ in Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote eds., *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade* (London: British Library, 2007), 39-68.

⁹⁶ Fol. 24^r: ‘Sabusachole veduit Odorichus’.

Bologna in the first decade of the sixteenth century.⁹⁷ Achillini integrates details of eastern settings and marvels in order to ridicule the tastes of Ombrone, a painter who is obsessed with collecting exotica. In the first letter, Ombrone's residence is described, replete with a room housing precious stones 'dal'estreme parti del'India Maggiore, per una parte dal gran Prete Gianni [...] et parte dal'insula Taprobane'; his reference to the harvesting of these gems by 'aligeri griphoni' echoes Marco Polo's report of the harvesting of diamonds by eagles in India.⁹⁸ The second letter purports to be written by Ombrone to a friend, describing a fantastical voyage to the East. Meeting a unicorn in a forest, Ombrone claims, he was transported into a cave wherein he finds a hoard of treasure and an inscription explaining that he is the rightful owner. In an echo of the Mandeville's description of the palaces of the Great Khan and Prester John, the room in which the treasure is housed is lit by a 'lucido rubino, anzi ardente carbone' that hangs from a golden chain. A book found amongst the treasure releases a number of angelic spirits, including one, Remisses, who promises to transport Ombrone to Calicut. A magical boat flies them as far as the Pillars of Hercules, from where they set course for the Antipodes, a journey for which they cannot use traditional methods of navigation but are guided by the presence of the Antarctic star.⁹⁹ This specific detail strongly suggests that Achillini was familiar with the the *Book*, the most widespread contemporary source to argue for the existence of the star; it also explicitly situates the land of Prester John in the Antipodes, where Ombrone's new kingdom is located.¹⁰⁰ The *Book*'s success in Bologna at this time is mark of its broad popular appeal, but Achillini's satirical engagement suggests that it was also associated with the culture of collection.

As the sixteenth century progressed, scholarly interest increasingly turned towards the distinguishing and cataloguing of individual species of plants and

⁹⁷ The letters are published by Claudio Franzoni in 'Le raccolte del Theatro di Ombrone e il viaggio in Oriente del pittore: le Epistole di Giovanni Filoteo Achillini', *Rivista di letteratura italiana* 8 (1990), 287-335. See also Donattini, 'Il mondo portato a Bologna', pp. 30-32.

⁹⁸ Claudio Franzoni, 'Le raccolte', 311-12.

⁹⁹ Franzoni, 'Le raccolte', 317: 'Et volta la prora della cimba agli antipodi, cominciammo ad arrivare et se di calamita et charta ci faceva misterio di novi ci convenirebbe rovedere, perché non più l'artico, ma l'antartico polo per quello diuturno viaggio mirava'.

¹⁰⁰ *TBJM*, p. 111: 'In this land and in many others over there the Tramontane star cannot be seen at all [...] But one can see another star opposite it, which is called Antarctic. And just as sailors here take their bearings and steer themselves by that star to the north, so the sailors over there use this star to the south'; p. 113: 'Know that according to what I can perceive and understand, the lands of Prester John, the emperor of India, are under us. For in going from Scotland or England towards Jerusalem one is always climbing; for our land is in the low part of the earth to the west, and Prester John's land is the low part of the earth to the east'.

animals, leading to the recognition of natural history as a distinct discipline.¹⁰¹ Naturalists across Europe collected specimens, crafted botanical gardens and established international networks of correspondence in an effort to systematically describe the world around them. Although they were eager to receive the most up-to-date reports of newly discovered flora and fauna from the Americas, Africa and Asia, they also continued to consult medieval accounts of the East.¹⁰² Mandeville's continued relevance within this context is demonstrated by the famous debate concerning the Borametz, or Vegetable Lamb: a Central Asian plant that was believed to produce live sheep as its fruit. Reported by Odoric and subsequently embellished by Mandeville, the legend was brought to prominence in Sigismund von Heberstein's *Rerum muscovitarum commentarii* (1556), which was read by naturalists across Europe. When the Pavese polymath Girolamo Cardano published his own reflections on the debate in his *De rerum varietate* (1557), his longstanding rival Giulio Cesare Scaliger did not miss the opportunity to satirize his opponent in his *Exotericarum exercitationum* of the same year; both works clearly show the indirect influence of the *Book*, moderated through von Heberstein.¹⁰³ There appears to have been similar interest in the report of the barnacle goose, which Mandeville claims are born when the fruit of specific trees falls into water. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, wrote in his *Commentaries* that before he visited Scotland on a diplomatic mission in 1435 he had heard tales of 'trees there growing along a river, the fruit of which rotted, if it fell on the ground, but if it fell into the water, came to life and turned into birds; but, when he eagerly investigated this marvel on the spot, he found that it was all a lie or, if true, had been moved on to the Orcades Islands'.¹⁰⁴ Although the marvel appears in other sources, including Odoric, its location in the British Isles suggests Piccolomini may have encountered it through the *Book*. The barnacle goose was

¹⁰¹ On the development of natural history in the sixteenth century, see Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹⁰² The Swiss naturalist Conrad Gessner, for example, cites both Polo and Odoric in his five-volume *Historiae animalium* (1551-58), providing page references for Latin editions of both texts.

¹⁰³ See Henry Lee, *The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary; A Curious Fable of the Cotton Plant* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1887) and Jan Bondeson, 'Spontaneous Generation' in *The Feejee Mermaid and Other Essays in Natural and Unnatural History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 193-249. On the rivalry between Cardano and Scaliger, see Guido Giglioni, 'Scaliger versus Cardano versus Scaliger' in David Lines, Jill Kraye and Marc Laureys, eds., *Forms of Conflicts and Rivalries in Renaissance Europe: Cultural Polemics in Europe, c. 1300-c. 1650* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015), pp. 109-30.

¹⁰⁴ *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II*, trans. Florence A. Gragg, ed. Leona C. Gabel (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 33-4.

commented on well over a century later by the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (d. 1605), professor of natural philosophy and natural history at the University of Bologna, who observed that ‘some authors are not afraid to write’ of the phenomenon, but that it ‘now appears to be false’.¹⁰⁵

An important figure in the establishment of natural history as a scholarly discipline, Aldrovandi amassed substantial botanical and zoological collections, as well as a vast library containing many thousands of printed books and manuscripts.¹⁰⁶ The four surviving catalogues Aldrovandi made of his library attest to his wide-ranging interests; the most complete, MS Aldrov. 147, records that he owned a vernacular printed edition of the *Book*.¹⁰⁷ Whilst it might be assumed that a sixteenth-century scholar of Aldrovandi’s repute would be uninterested in Mandeville, references to the *Book* appear throughout his vast published output, including the visionary thirteen-volume *Natural History*. These instances of engagement reveal a developed awareness of the *Book* as a source of natural historical information. Aldrovandi cites Mandeville on a variety of eastern flora and fauna: from reports of plants in the realm of Prester John in the *Dendrologiae* to the presence of white lions on the island of Silha in *De Quadropedibus*. Such examples reveal that Aldrovandi was willing to consider Mandeville alongside more established sources, albeit with a degree of circumspection. In his discussion of the legendary astomi in *Monstrorum historia*, Aldrovandi ranks Mandeville alongside Solinus and Strabo as a trustworthy *auctor* whose testament supports Pliny.¹⁰⁸ The description of the griffon in the same text again uses Mandeville as a serious eyewitness source, although here Aldrovandi lifts a phrase from Sallust’s *Bellum Jugurthinum* to disclaim responsibility for any

¹⁰⁵ Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae* vol. 3, book 19, p. 171: ‘Hinc factum, ut nonnulli authores non veriti sint scribere, quod in Scotia in arboribus nascantur, e quarum ramis supra aquam expansis si fructus in aquam decidunt, Anserum pullos gigni, qui statim natant, qui vero in terram, corrumpi, nec ad frugem pervenire. Quod falsum esse nunc apparet’.

¹⁰⁶ On Aldrovandi, see in particular Giuseppe Olmi, *Ulisse Aldrovandi. Scienza e natura nel secondo Cinquecento* (Trent: Università di Trento, 1976). Until recently Aldrovandi’s library has remained relatively unstudied. For a significant recent contribution, see Caroline Duroselle-Melish and David Lines, ‘The Library of Ulisse Aldrovandi (†1605): Acquiring and Organizing Books in Sixteenth-Century Bologna’, *The Library: the Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 16, 2 (2015), 136–161. See also Maria Cristina Bacchi, ‘Ulisse Aldrovandi e i suoi libri’, *L’Archiginnasio. Bollettino della Biblioteca Comunale di Bologna*, 100 (2005), 255–366.

¹⁰⁷ Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria MS Aldrov. 147, fol. 337^v. Aldrovandi gives the *Book*’s title as *De rebus mirabilibus*. I am grateful to David Lines for his assistance with this reference.

¹⁰⁸ Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia*, p. 5: ‘Fides tamen sit penes authores, quos in multis fide dignos invenimus’.

inaccuracy.¹⁰⁹ In a further discussion of the griffon in the *Ornithologiae*, Mandeville is the only modern source alongside a wealth of ancients. Although the *Book*'s description is largely accepted, its calculation of the bird's size is dismissed as hyperbole.¹¹⁰ Elsewhere Aldrovandi offers a more negative assessment of the *Book*, as is the case in *Ornithologiae tomus alter* where he highlights his doubts concerning Mandeville's report of large black geese found in India.¹¹¹ As Brian Ogilvie has noted, this pattern of juxtaposing contradictory sources and providing the reader with sufficient information to draw their own conclusion is typical of Aldrovandi, and serves to prolong the lifespan of texts that had largely faded from scholarly significance.¹¹² Aldrovandi's familiarity with Mandeville and willingness to consider him alongside both classical and more recent sources can therefore be understood as somewhat anachronistic; but it also demonstrates that the *Book* was not, as some critics have argued, entirely excluded from the culture of late sixteenth-century scholarship.¹¹³

Conclusion

Italian readers of the *Book* displayed a variety of interests in the world beyond the Levant that can be broadly understood as 'geographical'. The mercantile elite of Florence and Venice read and copied the *Book* in manuscript form, intrigued by its reports of the Indies' tradeable goods and vast riches. Although the text had a negligible impact on Italian cartography and scholarly geography, it continued to circulate at the periphery of these fields, exerting a popularizing influence. The emphasizing of the *Book* as a source of information on the world beyond the Levant was central to its remarkable success in print around the turn of the sixteenth century, with Italian printers using paratextual features to frame it in the context of more recent discoveries. Even after the peak of the text's popularity, it continued to be

¹⁰⁹ Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum historia*, p. 341: 'Mandavilla in suo itinero has bestias describere videtur tanquam naturales animantes, ex quarum unguibus pocula parari, et ex pennarum costis arcus fabrefieri retulit, sed fides penes auctorem maneat'.

¹¹⁰ Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae*, p. 604: 'Montevillanus verò hyperbolicè, et enormi mendacio, enormem ei corporis molem, octo nimirum leonibus maiorem ascribit'.

¹¹¹ Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae tomus alter*, p. 45: 'Postremo in India maiori Anseres esse refert Io. Mondavilla, duplo nostratibus maiores, vropygium nigros, caetera albos. Sed an hi cum illis, quos recenset Odoricus, fidem fuerint, dubitari potest'.

¹¹² Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing*, p. 241.

¹¹³ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 276.

relevant to specialist audiences whose interest was provoked by scientific trends towards categorizing and cataloguing the natural world. The diversity of these geographical interests and the appeal of the *Book* to such a wide range of readers is in many ways a reflection of the encyclopaedic culture that led to the production of the *Book*, and which is represented within the text itself.

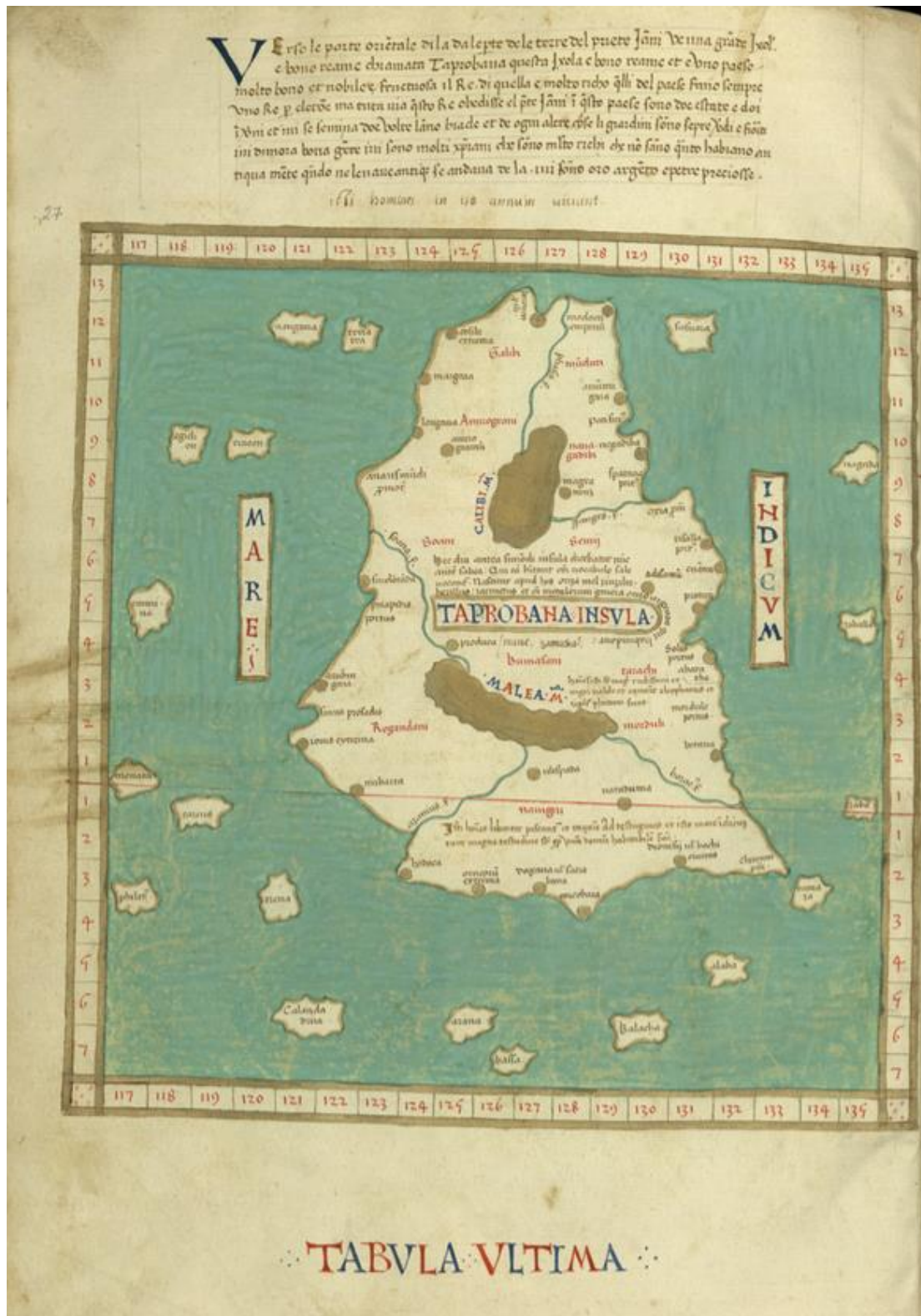


Figure 8: Taprobane, with a legend from the Italian version of the *Book*. From a Ptolemaic map of the workshop of Nicolaus Germanus. National Library of Finland, A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection, MS Misc. 1, pl. Asia 12.

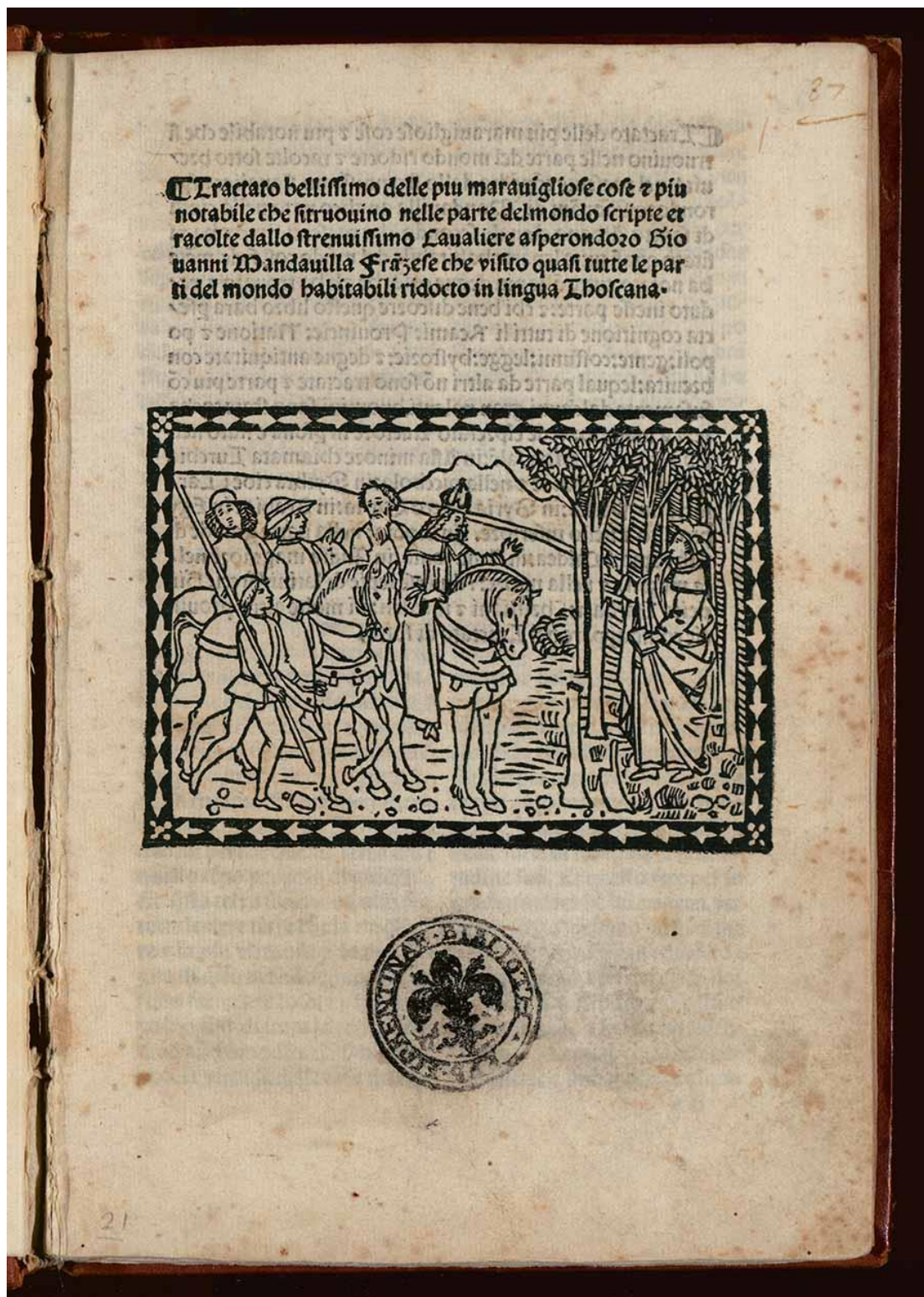


Figure 9: Title page (a1') of the 1492 Florentine edition of the *Book of John Mandeville*, published by Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri.



Figure 10: Frontispiece from the 1502 Milanese edition of the *Book of John Mandeville* (Pietro Martire da Mantegazza for Giovanni da Legnano).



Figure 11: The Barnacle Goose, from Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae* vol. 3, p. 174 (Bologna: Francesco de Franceschi, 1599).

Chapter 5: Theological concerns

In her study of the European reception of the *Book*, Tzanaki observes that ‘issues of faith and religion are among the main themes throughout the *Book*, underlying all the levels on which it can be read’.¹ As the previous three chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, Italian readers with a variety of different interests approached the text in ways often underpinned by religious concerns. The two centuries in which the *Book* circulated most widely in Italy were a time of profound change for Christianity, both within the peninsula and across Europe as a whole. Italians at all levels of society became ever more aware of the multiple forms that Christianity could take through growing exposure to the diversity of eastern rites and, in the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation. Italians were also increasingly exposed to a variety of global religious beliefs. The expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain in 1492 brought many thousands to the Italian States, whilst Islam remained prominent both through the threat of the expansionist Ottoman Empire and through trade with the Ottoman Empire. Although pagan belief was very much a part of Europe’s own history, Portuguese and Spanish discoveries in Asia and the Americas revealed developed societies with polytheistic traditions, prompting interest among Italian intellectuals. Finally, the growing call for Catholic reform during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that led to the Council of Trent (1545-63) was to have a tremendous impact on the religious worldview of Italians.

This chapter focuses on readers of Mandeville who had a specific interest in its theological content. Following an introduction to the religious themes of the Italian and Vulgate Latin redactions, it will explore the circulation of the text in religious contexts. As in previous chapters, material evidence from surviving copies of the *Book* will be employed alongside secondary source material to assess the attitudes of Italian readers towards non-Latin forms of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and pagan religion. The chapter will conclude with an appraisal of the *Book*’s fortune in Italy in the era of Tridentine reform and after.

¹ Tzanaki, *Mandeville’s Medieval Audiences*, p. 119.

Religious diversity in the *Book*

The religious character of the *Book* is itself hybrid and complex, blending the devotional content of a pilgrimage account with a curiosity towards eastern religion. Though profoundly Christian, Mandeville's account displays a markedly open attitude towards eastern religion. In sharp contrast to this overall pattern, however, the prologue describes the Holy Land with unambiguous crusade rhetoric:

[...] every good Christian who has the power and the means ought to take pains and do great work to conquer our above-mentioned and right inheritance and take it from the hands of the miscreants and appropriate it [...] and if we are true sons of God, we ought to reclaim the inheritance our Father left to us and wrest it from the hands of the foreigners.²

It soon becomes clear that this is linked to a call for reform, a theme that will appear on several occasions in the course of the *Book*. The moral laxity of Christian rulers, whose pride, greed and envy makes them inclined to infighting, is explicitly identified as the cause of Christendom's lost territory. Notably, Mandeville's criticism also extends to ecclesiastical authority: he laments the fact that no pope has been inclined to pronounce a general passage, comparing the princes of Christendom to a flock without a shepherd. Although the *Book* is not quite the 'anti-papal pamphlet in disguise' proclaimed by Paul Hamelius, an early editor of the Cotton text, Mandeville shares the anti-clerical tendency that characterizes much fourteenth-century writing.³

Later episodes develop the *Book*'s reformist agenda. The most notable of these is the remarkable description of a private audience between Sir John and the Sultan of Babylon, in which the latter questions the former on the state of Christendom. Rejecting Sir John's positive assessment of Christian rulers, the Sultan describes the pride and avarice of princes and priests, which, he states, has led them to betray their own faith. A similar critical mirror is held up in the description of ritual suicides

² *TBJM*, p. 4.

³ Paul Hamelius, *Mandeville's Travels: the Cotton version*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 15.

before a pagan idol in southern India, an episode adapted from Odoric's *Relatio*. Here, Mandeville admires the faith of the pagan worshippers, observing that 'no Christian would scarcely dare undertake to do a tenth as much for his love of Christ'.⁴

Beyond its concern with the corruption of Christendom, the *Book* is characterized by a broader focus on religious diversity. The prologue's promise to discuss 'diverse peoples and diverse faiths' underpins the entire text, with Mandeville providing regular commentary on local religious beliefs and practices. In the first half of the text, these digressions deal mostly with non-Latin forms of Christianity. The description of Constantinople contains a thorough list of the differences between the Latin and Greek rites, preceded by a description of a supposed exchange of letters between Pope John XII and the Greeks in which the latter assert their independence from papal authority. Though this is based primarily on Jacques de Vitry's *Historia orientalis*, Mandeville ignores the critical tone of his source, offering instead more balanced account of Greek Christianity, included so that the reader 'might know the diversity that exists between our belief and theirs, for many people enjoy and take pleasure in hearing foreign things spoken about'.⁵ A similar attitude is expressed in the description of the various kinds of Christians found in Jerusalem, a staple of pilgrimage accounts. Here Mandeville describes the beliefs of the Jacobites, Syrians, Georgians, Christians of the Girdle, Nestorians, Nubians and 'Indians of Prester John', stating that 'all are baptized and have different laws and different customs, but all believe in God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. But they always lack some articles of our faith'.⁶

Further representation of Christian diversity comes in the second half of the *Book*, with a description of the miracles accomplished by means of a relic of St Thomas in southern India and the Christians of Armenia, Georgia and the kingdom of Abchaz. The most prominent example of Eastern Christianity, however, is the chapter devoted to Prester John, the mystical prelate whose fame had spread throughout

⁴ *TBJM*, p. 109.

⁵ *TBJM*, p. 15. For example, De Vitry's description of Greek attitudes towards Papal authority: 'Patet ergo, cum super hanc petram, pro qua Dominus rogavit ut non deficeret fides eius post Christum, edificata sit et fundata Christi ecclesia, quod omnes qui ab Ecclesia Romana recedunt, qui absque fundamento edificant, in vanum laborantes et ab eo qui a Domino Cephas vocatus est separati, acephali et monstrosi homines merito sunt reputandi' (Jean Donnadiou ed. and trans., *Histoire Orientale/Historia Orientalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 302-4.

⁶ *TBJM*, p. 73. Mandeville bases his list on William of Boldensele, who may have identified the Maronites as Christians of the Girdle, so named because of their affiliation with the legend of the Girdle of St Thomas.

Europe since the twelfth century through the circulation of the *Littera Presbyteris Johannis*, purportedly sent to the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus.⁷ The *Book*'s extensive report stands apart from contemporary travel accounts, which largely ignored the Prester John tradition; Odoric, in particular, dismisses reports of the splendour and nobility of his country as exaggerated. Although the *Book* goes to great lengths to emphasize Prester John's might and material wealth, Mandeville's description focuses primarily on the Christian faith of the Emperor and his realm, reworking material from the *Littera*. As Higgins notes, these borrowings are endowed with a 'thematic and ideological resonance that they lack in the original'.⁸ The description of the prelate's army following thirteen gold crosses into battle contrasts strongly with the exordium's criticism of Christian princes too interested in personal gain to mount a crusade. Though these Eastern Christians 'do not have all the articles of the law', they are presented as paragons of Christian morality: Prester John has several wives, but sleeps with them only four times a year for the purpose of procreation, whilst his citizens shun fraud, trickery and lies. The juxtaposition of this account with the Old Man of the Mountain episode (which, repositioned from its place in Odoric's *Itinerarium*, immediately follows) serves only to highlight the piety and benevolence of this Eastern Christian leader.

The *Book*'s exploration of religious diversity extends far beyond the varieties of Christian belief. Monotheistic traditions and more exotic pagan religions are described in depth with the same objectivity afforded to Eastern Christianity (with one notable exception). The most extensive instance of this is the account of Islam that concludes the first half of the *Book*. Basing his report primarily on pseudo-William of Tripoli's *Tractatus de statu Saracenorum* (1273), Mandeville emphasizes the proximity of Christian and Saracen belief, surveying the Koran's representation of Paradise, the Virgin Mary, the Incarnation, and Christ. Where the *Tractatus* presents a moderately positive picture of Islam, Mandeville goes to great lengths to outline similarities between Christian and Saracen belief, dwelling in particular on shared veneration of Mary and recognition of Christ as a prophet. The reporting of a prophecy that a Latin ruler will once again rule the Holy Land serves to present the Saracens as proto-Christians; this similarity is also highlighted in Sir John's

⁷ On the Prester John tradition, see Robert Silverberg, *The Realm of Prester John* (Garden City, NY: 1972) and Keagan Brewer, *Prester John: the Legend and its Sources* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

⁸ Higgins, *Writing East*, p. 191.

aforementioned conversation with the Sultan, which Suzanne Conklin Akbari reads as ‘a microcosm of the close relationship of Christianity and Islam as described in the *Book*’.⁹ The brief life of Mohammed that concludes this section presents more familiar material, but in explaining the roots of a number of Saracen customs – such as the prohibition of alcohol, which purportedly originates from a drunken altercation resulting in the death of one of Mohammed’s acquaintances – it serves to rationalize the differences between the two faiths.

The numerous pagan religions described in the *Book* would have been considerably less familiar to Mandeville’s contemporaries. Particular attention is paid to the beliefs of the Mongols, both in the description of unusual religious practices (such as their veneration of the sun and moon) and in the highlighting of their sympathetic view towards Christianity.¹⁰ Placing the Mongols within a Christian historical framework by associating the etymology of Cham (Khan) with Noah’s son Ham, Mandeville also claims that a previous Khan, Möngke, converted to Christianity and sent his son to conquer the Holy Land ‘to place it in the hands of Christians’.¹¹ Mandeville further notes the preferential treatment of Christians at the Mongol court, before observing that ‘it is a great harm that [the Great Khan] does not believe steadfastly believe in God. Nevertheless, he most willingly hears God spoken about [by Christians] and certainly allows that there are Christians who go throughout his whole country’.¹² The fundamental tenets of Mongol theology remain somewhat ambiguous, but great emphasis is placed on their belief in the ‘God of Nature’. The possibility of salvation through the natural law – which keys into a rich tradition that stretches back to Augustine and Isidore of Seville, and was discussed by contemporaries of Mandeville including Boccaccio – is central to the portrayal of a number of pagan peoples towards the eastern apex of the *Book*’s itinerary.¹³ The virtuous inhabitants of the island of Bragmey are not Christians, but ‘nevertheless by

⁹ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), p. 54.

¹⁰ Mongol tolerance of religious diversity is well documented. See Michal Biran, ‘Religious Exchange’ in Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks eds., *The Cambridge World History, Volume V: Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict, 500 CE–1500 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 545–48.

¹¹ This etymological reasoning is founded on the standard medieval association of the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe with Noah’s three sons, although Mandeville switches Ham with Shem in order to support his argument.

¹² *TBJM*, p. 146.

¹³ On this, see John Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

the natural law they are full of all virtues', their harmonious society suggesting that 'God loves them and favourably accepts their belief and their good works'.¹⁴ The *Book* also describes the encounter of Alexander the Great with the inhabitants of Oxidrate and Gynosophe, adapted from the Alexander Romance, in an episode where the all-conquering king is reprimanded for his pride and reminded of his mortality.

The rise of postcolonial criticism has prompted particular interest in the *Book's* representation of eastern religions. Mandeville is regularly described using terms such as 'tolerant' or 'enlightened'; one critic discerns in the *Book* 'an attitude clearly inspired by a liberal interpretation of Christian universalism'.¹⁵ This open representation of non-Christian religion, however, does not apply equally to all faiths. In stark contrast to its liberal depictions of Islam and pagan beliefs, the *Book* wholly conforms to established medieval patterns in its portrayal of the Jews. Although direct references to Judaism are few in number, Mandeville almost invariably represents Jews in a negative manner. In the description of the Passion relics located in Constantinople, the reader is reminded of the harm done by the Jews to Christ, whilst the account of Islam includes the observation that, like Christians, 'the Saracens say the Jews are wicked'.¹⁶ The clearest evidence of anti-Semitism comes in the description of Gog and Magog, the legendary tribes enclosed by Alexander that are prophesied to come forth at the time of the Antichrist. Here, Mandeville rejects the common medieval identification of these peoples with the Mongols, claiming instead that they are the Lost Tribes of Israel, yearning to unite with their kin 'to destroy Christians'.¹⁷

Given this marked digression from the general pattern of the *Book*, is it possible to follow the example of Bennett, Tzanaki and others in referring to the text as 'tolerant'? This is a question that has increasingly troubled scholars of Mandeville. The *Book* is indeed remarkably open in its portrayal of other religions (with the exception of Judaism), especially when compared with contemporary authors, and indeed many of those used as sources; yet recent scholarship has connected Mandeville's refusal to accept Judaism with a broader attitude towards Christian

¹⁴ *TBJM*, p. 173.

¹⁵ Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Nature and Customs in Late Medieval Ethnography: Marco Polo and John Mandeville', in Maaike van der Lugt ed., *La nature comme source de la morale au Moyen Âge* (Florence: Galluzzo, 2014), pp. 189-232 (p. 214).

¹⁶ *TBJM*, p. 86.

¹⁷ This tradition was, by contrast, relatively rare. See *TBJM*, p. 182.

domination.¹⁸ His representation of Saracens, Mongols and pagans as 'proto-Christians' cannot be applied to the Jews, whose rival claim to the Holy Land leaves them beyond hope of redemption. Robert Hakan Pattinson talks of the *Book's* 'intolerant universalism', arguing that the use of terms such as 'tolerance' with regard to Mandeville 'makes it difficult if not impossible to see the discursive violence and intolerance his universalism entails'.¹⁹ Such questions are challenging, and I make no attempt to answer them here beyond suggesting that the *Book* be viewed as precisely what it is: a text written in a medieval Christian context that is nevertheless characterized by a recurring and, broadly speaking, positive portrayal of religious diversity.

The Vulgate Latin redaction

Whilst questions remain regarding Mandeville's open-mindedness, one of the many rewritings of the *Book* is decidedly more negative in its representation of eastern religion. The Vulgate Latin redaction was made by an unknown scribe at some point after 1390, according to the text itself in Liège. It soon became a significant international text and survives in 40 manuscripts, many of which were produced or circulated in religious contexts.²⁰ It is of particular relevance to this chapter since at least three of these manuscripts were produced in Italy, where they were read in ecclesiastical settings.

The Vulgate redaction is characterized by an underscoring of Christian orthodoxy that contrasts strongly with other versions of the *Book*, with the translator intervening with his exemplar more than in any other redaction.²¹ Sir John's pilgrimage is given greater prominence and a stronger emphasis is placed upon its textual authority, both through the supplementing of Sir John's eyewitness claims and the fact that the exordium neglects to present the text as a translation, thus implying it

¹⁸ For a developed investigation of this question, see Robert Hakan Patterson, 'Mandeville's Intolerance: The Conquest for Souls and Sacred Sites in *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*', unpublished doctoral thesis, Washington University, Saint Louis, Missouri, 2009. See also Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 45-6.

¹⁹ Patterson, 'Mandeville's Intolerance', p. 9.

²⁰ There is currently no critical edition of the Vulgate text. I use the version printed by Richard Hakluyt in the first volume of his *Principal Navigations* (1589).

²¹ In this respect, as well as with regards to its international circulation, the Vulgate redaction is analogous to the Latin translation of Marco Polo by the Bolognese friar Francesco Pipino.

is the most authoritative version of the *Book*.²² The removal of the discussion of Jerusalem's centrality and the circumnavigability of the globe similarly compromises Mandeville's vision of the world.²³ Another prominent intervention is the redaction of a considerable amount of material pertaining to non-Latin religion. The Greek response to the pope is removed, and the account of the Orthodox faith shortened. The translator's intervention takes another form in the account of Islam: here, little material is removed, but, along with the addition of a condemning chapter heading 'De secta detestabili Saracenorum et eorum fide', regular interjections remind the reader of Saracen sinfulness.²⁴ The account of Mongol religion is also markedly critical. Reverence of the sun and moon, reported neutrally in the Continental and Insular texts, is described as deceptive and false, and the passage concludes with an exhortation to the reader to 'be intent upon how truly the pagans walk in darkness, their minds enwrapped in diabolical darkness'.²⁵

In line with this orthodox rewriting, several passages are remodelled as overtly Christian. An abbreviated exordium emphasizes Sir John's status as a pilgrim and the text's devotional value, a theme that is picked up again in the description of Constantinople where Sir John's piety is accentuated. The conversation with the Sultan concludes with a challenge for Christians to improve in order that they may regain the Holy Land and convert Saracens to the Catholic faith. Perhaps the clearest example of all is Sir John's journey through the Vale Perilous, which is reworked into a purgatorial trial that places emphasis on the necessity of sincere faith and the taking of communion to ensure safe passage. The Vulgate redaction is testament to the fact that readers of the *Book* not only differed markedly from Mandeville's attitudes, but

²² *TBJM*, p. 29.

²³ On the Vulgate redactor's reimagination of the Indies, see O'Doherty, *The Indies and the Medieval West*, pp. 230-38.

²⁴ The chapter headings given in Richard Hakluyt's 1589 edition of the Vulgate text are present in the majority of the manuscript corpus, suggesting they were added by the original translator. These include a warning of 'fictitious' Saracen beliefs concerning the Virgin Mary ('Haec et his similia multa ibi scribuntur figmenta, et isti plura inter se narrando component, quae hoc loco ventilanda non sunt'), as well as more general observations ('Sed cum isti, ut supradictum est, in tenebris ambulant, id circo ignorantes Dei iustitiam, stauere volunt iustitiam, imo iniustitiam quam fabricant in corde suo, quia nos de cruce Christi scriptum novimus, benedictum est lignum per quod fit iustitia') (Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations* (London: Bishop, Newberie and Barker, 1598), p. 42-3. I am grateful to Marianne O'Doherty for her advice on this subject.

²⁵ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, p. 62: 'Multas supervacuas observant ceremonias, quia respiciunt in vanitates et insanias falsas: solem et lunam praecipue adorant, eisque frequenter genua curvant, et ad novilunium, quicquid est magni estimant inchoandum'; p. 64: 'Nos igitur intendamus hoc loco quaeso quomodo veraciter Pagani in tenebris ambulant, diabolica involutione mente eorum obtenebrata'.

that some were willing to substantially alter the text in order to better represent their own religious views.

Religious interest and the *Book's* Italian circulation

Evidence for the *Book's* circulation across Europe shows that its readers had a broad range of religious interests and concerns. Many extant manuscripts of both vernacular and Latin redactions can be connected with religious contexts, where the text was either copied *in situ* or presented by a donor. Marks of ownership and other material evidence also show that the *Book* was owned by members of the clergy, including chaplains and parish priests.²⁶ Manuscript compendia also include Mandeville alongside texts of a religious nature, including hagiographic texts, dream visions, and more general devotional material, such as prayers and extracts from Scripture.²⁷ Elsewhere, marks, annotations and deletions reveal the interest of both lay and clerical readers in particular aspects of the *Book's* religious content. Although there is little scholarship concerning the *Book's* printed editions, there is evidence that it continued to attract readers with a religious interest even as its audience expanded and diversified.

Surviving copies of the *Book* that were produced in Italy largely conform to this broader European picture. The earliest surviving Latin manuscript, was copied in 1415 by Leonisio Doglioni, a deacon of Belluno Cathedral, where it was kept in the chapter library. A second manuscript of the Vulgate version, Oxford Latin, was copied in 1445 by a scribe named Antonio in 'Colla de Garderane districtus Verrone' (possibly Colà, now a *frazione* of the town of Lazise on the shore of Lake Garda). Badly mutilated in places, the manuscript is composed of both parchment and paper. At a number of points, parchment sections contain notes bearing the names of biblical figures, seemingly unrelated to the text. Whilst difficult to date, these suggest the

²⁶ See Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 33-5, 68-9. As Chapter 2 has discussed, manuscripts associated with enclosed religious orders sometimes show signs of use in the practice of virtual pilgrimage.

²⁷ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, pp. 255-8. Tzanaki notes that this pattern, whilst true of the various English versions, the Vulgate Latin redaction and the German von Diemeringen texts (which derives from the Vulgate), does not apply to the Continental text. Only one of the Continental manuscripts she consults is bound in this way. Her analysis is limited to French manuscripts, which circulated primarily in secular contexts.

possible recycling of parchment that had previously been used in an ecclesiastical context.

Manuscripts of the Italian version were also read in religious settings. Interestingly, there is no decisive evidence linking the vernacular text with a religious readership prior to its appearance in print (although, as this chapter will show, marginalia in some earlier manuscripts suggests a strong interest in the *Book*'s representation of non-Latin religion). One of the three compendia containing extracts from the *Book*, Venice Biblioteca Marciana MS It. VI. 208, was produced in the early sixteenth century by a Venetian Franciscan who had himself travelled to the Holy Land.²⁸ The Florentine manuscript FN, produced some time after 1503, includes the *Book* (copied from a Florentine printed edition) alongside a number of religious works, including extracts from Savonarola, a brief treatise on the omnipotence of God, extracts from the *Meditatione sopra la vita di Gesù Cristo* of the Tuscan nobleman Benedetto degli' Alessandri (published in Florence in 1497), and numerous prayers. Alongside these are the *Storia dei sette dormenti* and the *Storia dei tre monaci che andarono al paradiso deliziano*, both examples of the genre of vernacular visions popular in Florence at the time. Although the precise origin of the manuscript is unclear, the inclusion of such texts is suggestive of a religious audience.

In print, the Italian version of the *Book* continued to attract religious readers. Copies were owned by priests such as Zanobi del Lavacchio, who recorded his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the back of his copy of the *Book*, and there is considerable evidence that the *Book* was present in ecclesiastical libraries.²⁹ In addition to instances where provenance can be demonstrated, this is revealed by marks of ownership and other material evidence. One Venetian copy held in the Biblioteca Marciana is bound in manuscript leaves from an earlier (perhaps fourteenth-century) Latin gospel of Matthew, whilst London, British Library IA.26788 contains a note stating it was owned by a Brother Deodato of Brescia.³⁰ Sixteenth-century copies also offer some limited evidence of readers interested in the Jesuit missions in India and China. In addition to a copy of the 1553 edition conserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Padua bound with two collections of Jesuit letters printed the previous year in Venice,

²⁸ Consuelo Wager Dutschke, 'Francesco Pipino and the Manuscripts of Marco Polo's "Travels"', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1993, pp. 678-80.

²⁹ See Chapter Two.

³⁰ Venice, Biblioteca Marciana D.268.

a copy of the 1567 edition now in the Royal Library of Copenhagen contains a note identifying its possessor as ‘Joannes Carolus sinos’.³¹ The rear flyleaves bear a transcription in the same hand of a letter from Goa received in Rome by the Company of Jesus in December 1576.³² The use of the appellation *sinos* in conjunction with knowledge of Jesuit correspondence implies the *Book*’s owner may have been connected with the Jesuit Chinese mission. As this chapter will continue to explore, both religious and secular readers of the *Book* also displayed a wide range of interests in religious diversity beyond Latin Christianity.

Eastern Christianity

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a period in which Catholicism grappled with the issue of self-definition. In addition to calls for ecclesiastical renewal and the growth of the reformist movement, Catholics came into increasingly regular contact with eastern forms of Christianity. Greek Orthodoxy had always been a counterpoint to the Latin tradition, but was made increasingly prominent in Italy by efforts to mend the schism at the Council of Florence (1431-49). Italians, too, had long been familiar with the notion of more exotic forms of Eastern Christianity, particularly through the traditions of the Magi and the mission of St Thomas to India, both widespread since late antiquity. The circulation of the Prester John letter from the twelfth century onwards helped to promulgate interest in Eastern Christians, particularly as Latin rulers sought a potential ally against the belligerent Mongol Empire. These notions continued to underpin the popular understanding of contact with Eastern Christians into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Pilgrimage accounts written in this period commonly refer to the presence of ‘Christians of St Thomas’ and ‘Indians of Prester John’ in Jerusalem, whilst Pope Eugenius summoned an Ethiopian delegation to the Council of Florence in the belief that they represented the mythical prelate.³³

The Council itself also had a significant impact on Italian awareness of Eastern Christians.³⁴ Having been convened in Basel, its relocation to Ferrara in 1438

³¹ Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria 104.b.199/2; Copenhagen, Royal Library Geog. 1587 oktav 66931.

³² The letter, which describes the miracle that led to the building of the Church of San Thome, does not appear in published Jesuit correspondence.

³³ Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 324.

³⁴ A great amount of scholarship has been dedicated to the Council and its legacy. See in particular the major contributions of Joseph Gill and Paolo Viti ed., *Firenze e il concilio di 1439. Covegno di studi*.

and then to Florence the following year brought a Greek delegation to Italy that included Patriarch Joseph II of Constantinople and the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus, who was greeted with great pomp and celebration. The Council prompted extended interaction between Greek and Italian scholars, and is widely considered to have made a crucial contribution to the development of Italian humanism, yet there is also evidence of an impact on popular culture. References to the Greek delegates appear in numerous chronicles and can be found in contemporary visual art, such as Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in the Magi Chapel of the Palazzo Medici Riccardi (1459-61), in which the Patriarch and Emperor are portrayed as the Magi Balthazar and Melchior. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 also brought large numbers of Greek emigrants to northern Italian cities. Venice, for example, had accrued a Greek population of 4,000 by 1478, who in 1514 were given permission to build their own church in which to celebrate the Orthodox rite.³⁵ As Italian Catholics came into more regular contact with Greek Christians, they also became increasingly aware of the differences between the two traditions.

Other more exotic forms of Eastern Christianity also became visible within Italy in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The closing years of the Council of Florence saw the attendance of Armenian, Ethiopian and Nestorian delegations, prompting a flurry of interest recorded by contemporary writers.³⁶ This continued into the era of the Spanish and Portuguese discoveries and is attested by a flourishing of literature related to Eastern Christianity, from popular verse such as Giuliano Dati's *La gran magnificencia del Prete Ianni* (1491) to the numerous Roman and Venetian editions of the *Divisiones decem nationum totius christianitatis* (1490), a treatise on Christian diversity that circulated widely throughout Europe. Later in the sixteenth century, the establishment of the Pontifical Colleges in Rome and the tour of the Japanese Tenshō embassy brought Italians into further contact with non-European Christians, albeit within the dominant framework of post-Tridentine orthodoxy.³⁷

Firenze, 29 novembre-2 dicembre 1989 (Florence: Olschki, 1994), 2 vols. For a more recent consideration of the encounter, see Judith Herrin and Stuart McManus, 'Renaissance Encounters: Byzantium meets the West at the Council of Ferrara-Florence', in Marina S. Brownlee and Dimitri Gondicas eds., *Renaissance Encounters: Greek East and Latin West* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 35-58. See also Luca Boschetto, *Società e cultura a Firenze al tempo del Concilio: Eugenio IV tra curiali, mercanti e umanisti (1434-1443)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2012).

³⁵ Jonathan Harris, *Greek Émigrés in the West* (Porphyrogenitus: Camberley, 1995), p. 27.

³⁶ Gill, *The Council of Florence*, p. 325.

³⁷ On the Ethiopian College and the religious changes of the Catholic Reformation, see Matteo Salvatore, 'The Jesuit Mission to Ethiopia (1555-1634) and the Death of Prester John', in Allison

In this context, it is unsurprising that many Italian manuscripts and printed editions of the *Book* display a range of evidence for readerly interest in Eastern Christianity, ranging from cursory references to more detailed glosses and annotations. Mandeville's comments on the various Christians found in Jerusalem attract attention in both Latin and Italian manuscripts, particularly those that circulated in a religious context. The scribal gloss of Oxford Latin, for example, draws attention to 'aliquibus christianis ultra maris brachii', whilst the rubrics present in LBL and MiA identify each of the individual sects.³⁸ The exchange of letters between the pope and the Greeks is also highlighted in several Italian manuscripts, with chapter headings, where present, largely maintaining Mandeville's neutral focus on diversity. The rubric introducing this passage in LBL notes 'la diferenzia che sono fra loro [the Greeks] et nui cristiani de la corte romano [sic.]', whilst MiA identifies 'Como egli hanno varie oppinione de le nostre'.³⁹ This neutrality is not universal: at least one manuscript, OB, shows evidence of a markedly negative attitude towards non-Latin Christianity. The scribal gloss exhibits little interest in Eastern Christians beyond noting the various sects encountered in Jerusalem, although the exclusion of Mandeville's reference to the Greek patriarch as equivalent in power and authority to the pope might be interpreted as cautious.⁴⁰ The text is annotated in Latin in two other hands, one of which appears exclusively alongside passages that refer either to non-Catholic forms of Christianity or to eastern religion; it is easy to discern from the comments made that it belongs to an individual with an interest in religious orthodoxy. The first and most prominent annotation accompanies the description of the Jacobite practice of confessing not to priests but to God alone, which is identified with a manicule and the judgement 'hoc absurdum est'.⁴¹ To the left of the text, a second manicule highlights the Catholic response with two further annotations. The first of these observes that the practice of confession is ordained by both Christ and the Old Testament, whilst the second, partially obscured by the binding, remarks on God's participation in confession through priestly mediation.⁴² Given the language of

Kavey ed., *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 141-72.

³⁸ Oxford Latin, fol. 11^v; OB, fol. 31^r.

³⁹ Fol. 7^r.

⁴⁰ The missing text reads: 'E dicono che tanta possanza 'a li loro patriarcha come 'a lo papa nostro' (MaC, fol. 5^r).

⁴¹ Fol. 31^r.

⁴² Fol 31^r: 'ita est [...] ordinata a Jesu Christo et antiqua lege eius stratum et prius'; 'Domine in [...] participat [...] se sacer[dote] ibi ostende[tur]'

these annotations and the staunch orthodoxy of the views they express, it is possible that they were made by clerical reader. The hand displays a number of typical sixteenth-century features, suggesting that the annotations were made during this period.

The Italian printed editions present a similarly ambivalent picture of readers' responses to the *Book's* portrayal of non-Latin Christians. The chapter headings introduced in the *editio princeps* present the Greeks in a somewhat negative manner. Four of the six headings referring to the Orthodox rite mention some sort of *errore* – a conservative intervention that contrasts with Ugo Ruggerio's inclusion of a vernacular translation of the Greek's response to the pope 'per intelligentia di vulgari'.⁴³ The stability of both text and paratext throughout the sixteenth century suggests that none of the *Book's* printers was unduly concerned with their product's representation of heterodoxy. Material evidence from printed editions reveals some interest, both neutral and judgmental, in passages representing non-Latin forms of Christianity. Marginal notes in Rome, BAV Inc. V. 199, a copy of the Venetian edition of 1500, list each of the sects at Jerusalem, with corresponding underlining in the body of the text. A discernably negative attitude can be observed in Copenhagen, Royal Library Inc. 2618, where the description of differences between the Latin and Greek rites and the response to the papal letter are deleted in brown ink; a manicule and marginal line also draws attention to the Jacobite practice of confession.⁴⁴ Instances such as these, however, are relatively few in number, suggesting that doctrinal differences between different forms of Christianity were of little interest to the majority of the *Book's* print readership.

The Italian Prester John tradition

Although the *Book's* description of real Eastern Christians received limited attention, its portrayal of Prester John had a considerably broader appeal. Following the initial circulation of the *Letter of Prester John* in the twelfth century, interest in the

⁴³ A6v: 'Queste parole latine per più intelligentia di vulgari così sonano: "La tua potentia circa li toi subditi firmamente credemo; la tua somma superbia non possemo tollerare; la tua avaritia non intedemo saciare. Sia lo Signor con teco perché cum noi è"'. This is retained in all the later Italian editions.

⁴⁴ Fol. a1^v-a2^r.

legendary prelate had remained strong. Italian translations of the *Letter* circulated alongside Latin and French versions, often accompanying the accounts of Odoric and Marco Polo, and the figure of Prester John appeared widely in vernacular literature, including works such as the anonymous late-thirteenth-century *Novellino*, Boccaccio's *Decameron* and romance epics like the *Guerrin meschino*.⁴⁵ Prester John also appears regularly on maps of this time, such as those produced in Venice in the mid-fifteenth century by Giovanni Leardo. These cartographical representations reflect a wider trend in thought by placing the kingdom of Prester John in Ethiopia, rather than Asia. This association is commonly attributed to expanding European geographical horizons, but recent scholarship has suggested that it began in the early fourteenth century.⁴⁶ Eugenius IV wrote two letters to 1438 and 1439 to Prester John, the presumed addressee being an Ethiopian emperor, and the attendance of an Ethiopian embassy at the Council of Florence further contributed to popular interest.⁴⁷ Italian printed production of material related to Prester John includes an Italian translation of the *Letter* issued in 1478 and an unstudied life of the emperor (after 1539), as well as translations of numerous Portuguese texts printed by Ramusio.⁴⁸ Throughout the period of Mandeville's popularity in Italy, Prester John was accepted by most as a real and relevant Eastern Christian.

Mandeville's inclusion of the Prester John myth and use of the *Letter* as a source ensured that the *Book* corroborated existing reports of the prelate. Existing manuscripts of the *Book* are often found bound alongside the *Letter*, with a notable trend for this across Europe among copies that circulated in a scholarly setting.⁴⁹ This is reflected in MiA, a compilation produced in the 1470s by Bernardo Lanzavecchia, a grammar school teacher from the town of Appiano Gentile in Lombardy. The

⁴⁵ For the Italian versions of the *Littera*, see Maria Livia Bendinelli, 'Volgarizzamenti italiani della "Lettera del Prete Gianni"' in *Testi e interpretazioni. Studi del Seminario di Filologia Romanza dell'Università di Firenze* (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1978), pp. 37-64, and Lidia Bartolucci, 'La "Lettera di Prete Gianni" nei volgarizzamenti italiani: una nuova testimonianza', *Quaderni di lingue e letteratura* 13 (1988), 17-21.

⁴⁶ Charles Beckingham argues that it began with an Ethiopian embassy that travelled to Europe in around 1310. See 'An Ethiopian Embassy to Europe, c.1310', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 14 (1989), 337-46. For early sources, see Brewer, *Prester John*, p. 214.

⁴⁷ Brewer, *Prester John*, p. 285.

⁴⁸ The life, entitled *In questa historia se narra tutta la vita de lo prete Ianni, imperador de India*, survives in a single copy in Seville's Biblioteca Colombina.

⁴⁹ For example, Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS 275, which belonged to the scholar Thomas Markaunt, includes Mandeville, Odoric and the *Letter*, all in Latin. See Marianne O'Doherty, 'The *Viaggio in Inghilterra* of a *Viaggio in Oriente*: Odorico da Pordenone's *Itinerario* from Italy to England', *Italian Studies* 64, 2 (2009), 198-220 (pp. 215-16).

manuscript, which opens with the Italian version of the *Book*, includes Odoric's *Itinerarium* and the *Letter*, both in Latin. Several instances in the *Letter* are marked with references to corresponding passages in the *Book*, suggesting a practice of textual comparison commensurate with the scribe's level of education.⁵⁰ Such a conclusion is supported by the inclusion of a chapter table for the *Book*, produced by Bernardo himself for his personal use. Here, the passage on Prester John is divided into seven individual headings, which identify him as a Christian of St Thomas and draw attention to the thirteen crosses borne by his army as standards.⁵¹ The corpus of Italian manuscripts provides further evidence for readerly interest in Prester John, although in many cases marginal notes emphasize the marvels and wealth of the prelate's kingdom, rather than his Christian faith. Aside from MiA, only one other manuscript, PP, makes any mention of his Christian beliefs.⁵² This trend continues in the printed editions, where three chapter headings added in the *editio princeps* refer to the extent of the prelate's kingdom, his wealth, and his military might, but make no reference to his faith.⁵³ Marginal notes left by readers of printed editions often highlight Prester John, but tend to comment on his material wealth rather than his Christian status. The indications therefore are that most readers saw the mythical emperor as another eastern marvel, rather than an important example of Eastern Christianity.

Mandeville was to have a broader impact on the Italian Prester John tradition. As the third chapter of this thesis has explored, the *Book* influenced the representation of Prester John in the Italian romance epic tradition. The most notable example of this pattern is Andrea da Barberino's *Il Guerrin meschino*, which draws particularly on the *Book*'s description of Prester John's opulent palace.⁵⁴ Mandeville's Prester John may

⁵⁰ This is also the case in Cambridge, Corpus Christi MS 275; see above.

⁵¹ MiA fol. 101^r: '[...] de capitulo in capitulum distinctus per me Bernardum Lanzavegiam preceptorem suprascriptum'.

⁵² PP fol. 41^r: 'De le tere del prete Iane imperatore de India qual è christiano e una gran parte del suo paexe ha soto luy lxii. re'.

⁵³ As per the *editio princeps*: 'De la possanza del Prete Ianni e de le gente e natione e reami che li sono sotoposti e del camino che li fa per andare ivi e de le richee e pietre preziose che sono in quelle parte'; 'Del modo che tene il Prete Ianne quando cavalcha contra inimici overo per la terra e del palazo suo e del ornamento se la sua camera'; 'De li servitori del prete Ianne e del modo che tengono in servirlo'.

⁵⁴ Cursietti ed., *Il Guerrin meschino*, p. 230-31: 'E in capo della sala avea una sedia tutta d'oro infinitamente adorna in pietre preziose: e 'n sulla sedia si saliva per sette scaglioni, e inn ogni scaglione era con lettere nere commesse scritto uno peccato mortale. E li scaglioni erano: il primo d'oro fine, e lle lettere dicevano "AVARIZIA"; el secondo era d'ariento, e lle lettere dicevano "FRIGIDA ACCIDIA"; el terzo era di rame e le lettere dicevano "INVIDIA"; el quarto era di ferro, e lle lettere dicevano "IRA"; el quinto di piombo, e lle lettere dicevano "GOLA"; el sesto era di legno, e 'n questo legno era intarsiato certe fiamme di fuoco che pareva ch'ardesse, e le lettere che dicevano: "LUSSURIA"; el settimo scaglione

also have influenced Andrea's emphasizing of the Emperor's military might: a central aspect of the character's portrayal, with Guerrino leading his army to victory against the Cinamoni. It is particularly notable that the accentuation of these features is at odds with the depiction of Prester John in Andrea's *Ugone d'Alvernia*, composed around 1400.⁵⁵ In the earlier work, the prelate is represented more as a pious priest than a powerful monarch: Ugo encounters him saying mass in a church, where he hears the protagonist's confession and pronounces him the least sinful man he has ever met.⁵⁶ Given that there is no evidence for engagement with the *Book* in Andrea's earlier work, it seems reasonable to conclude that it played an important role in his shaping of the character of Prester John in the *Guerrin meschino*.

Mandeville's portrayal of Prester John continued to influence popular representations of the eastern emperor in the late fifteenth century at a time of increasing interest in the wider world. One example of this is *La gran magnificientia del Prete Ianni signore dell'India maggiore e della Ethiopia*, a vernacular poem in *ottava rima* composed by the Florentine priest Giuliano Dati and published in Florence around 1492.⁵⁷ The poem primarily draws on the *Guerrin meschino* and Foresti da Bergamo's *Supplementum chronicarum*, both of which are directly cited, but several specific details suggest that Dati also consulted the *Book*. Dati numbers Prester John's army at 100,000 but notes that other sources state it is larger:

In altri libri i'ho ancor trovato
 Cento milia miglaia di persone
 tucti in un tempo a' lor nimici han dato,
 et quell che scrive fà conclusione
 che mai non fu morìa in simil lato,
 però con verità lo scrive et pone;

era di terra, e lle lettere dicevano "SUPERBIA". For comparison, see *TBJM*, p. 163: 'The steps to climb to the throne where he sits, the first is of onyx, the next of crystal, the next of green variegated jasper, the next of amethyst, the next of sardonyx, the next of cornelian, and the seventh on which he places his feet is of chrysolite; and all these steps are bordered with fine gold with other precious stones and large orient pearls'.

⁵⁵ Gloria Allaire, *Andrea da Barberino and the Language of Chivalry* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 201.

⁵⁶ Andrea da Barberino, *Storia di Ugone d'Avernia volgarizzata nel sec. XIV*, ed. by Francesco Zambrini and Alberto Bacchi della Lega, 2 vols. (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1882) (vol. I, p. 315).

⁵⁷ See Leonardo Olschki, 'I "Cantari dell'India" di Giuliano Dati', *La Bibliofilia* 50 (1938), 289-316.

se il conto in nostre parte tu farai
quanti ne muor di peste, el crederai.⁵⁸

(XXX)

This figure was commonly used in a generic sense to refer to an unspecified large number, making it difficult to identify Dati's specific source. The reference to a lack of population decline, however, finds a parallel in the *Book's* description of the island of Bragmey, located within the lordship of Prester John, where the virtue of the pagan inhabitants means that 'there have never been storms or lightning, nor hail, nor any plague, nor war, nor famine, nor other tribulation such as we have many times had over here for our sins'.⁵⁹ A further indication of Mandeville's influence comes towards the end of the poem, where Dati cites several of his sources:

molto ne narra un libro del meschino,
e'l libro del viaggio pellegrino.

Tractane ancora el tuo magno Strabone,
di quelle parti molto chiaro pone,
del paese et persone, s'io non mento.⁶⁰

(LVII-III)

In contrast to the identification of the *Guerrin meschino* and Strabo, the author of the 'viaggio pellegrino' remains unspecified. Observing that Dati was familiar with the anonymous *Treatise on the Ten Nations and Sects of Christianity*, published in the Low Countries on five occasions between 1496 and 1505 as an addendum to the *Itinerarius* of the fourteenth-century Jerusalem pilgrim Johannes de Hese, Francis Rogers concludes that the latter is the pilgrimage account referred to by Dati.⁶¹ This assumption, however, ignores the fact that the *Treatise* was printed as a standalone

⁵⁸ Achille Neri, ed., 'La Gran Magnificenza del Prete Janni: poemetto di Giuliano Dati, e Quattro lettere inedite di Carlo Roberto Dati', *Il Propugnatore* 9 (1876), 138-72 (p. 155).

⁵⁹ *TBJM*, p. 173.

⁶⁰ Neri, ed., 'La Gran Magnificenza del Prete Janni', p. 164.

⁶¹ Rogers, *The Quest for Eastern Christians*, pp. 98-9.

text by Eucharius Silber in Rome in 1490, and appeared in another fourteen Italian editions before the turn of the century. Since Dati almost certainly encountered the *Treatise* in one of these editions, it seems extremely unlikely that Hese is the *pellegrino* in question. Given the overlap of material and coincidence with the peak of the *Book*'s popularity, this may be a reference to Mandeville: the only pilgrimage text in print circulation to make explicit reference to Prester John. Notably, the sole known edition of Dati's poem was printed in Florence in 1492 by Lorenzo Morgiani, who along with his collaborator Johann Petri published the first Florentine edition of the *Book* in the same year. The woodcut frontispiece specifically commissioned for the poem portrays Prester John seated on a throne that conforms precisely with that described in the *Guerrin meschino*. Regardless of whether or not Morgiani was aware of the correlation with the *Book*'s description, this presentation testifies to the continued influence of Mandeville on Italian depictions of Prester John. That one of only three surviving copies of Dati's poem appears with a copy of the *Book* in contemporary binding indicates that readers read the two texts in conjunction.⁶²

As European geographical horizons expanded over the course of the sixteenth century, Prester John continued to hold a prominent position in the Italian imagination. Paolo Giovio could write in the 1550s of the 'paesi quasi infiniti' of the emperor, whilst as late as 1613, the Giunti press reissue of Ramusio's *Navigazioni e viaggi* advertised 'notitia del regno del prete Gianni'.⁶³ Although Mandeville is not referenced in these or other contemporary Italian sources, the *Book* is referred to in Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardin de flores curiosas* (1575), the Italian translation of which achieved great popularity with six editions published before 1620. In the second of a series dialogues on current intellectual questions, Antonio (Torquemada's mouthpiece) argues that the association between Prester John and Ethiopia is mistaken, citing the accounts of Marco Polo and Mandeville as evidence. He also recounts Mandeville's description of Mongol receptiveness towards Christianity as part of a discussion of missionary activity in the New World. Long after last the Italian edition of the *Book* had been printed, Mandeville was continuing to influence popular perceptions of Eastern Christianity.

⁶² Genoa, Biblioteca Universitaria VE0239.

⁶³ Paolo Giovio, *La prima parte delle historie del suo tempo di Mons. Paolo Giovio Vescovo di Nocera* (Florence: Domenico de Farri, 1555), p. 802.

Non-Christian religions

The *Book*'s popularity in Italy coincided with a period of increased European awareness of non-Christian religion, in terms of both Abrahamic faiths and, increasingly, polytheistic and animist beliefs. Mandeville's open-minded representation of such beliefs – with the notable exception of Judaism – circulated in an Italy in which attitudes were various, nuanced and mutable. The pluralistic thought that had inspired Mandeville and contemporaries including Boccaccio continued into the fifteenth century, even within the Church itself. The prominent German theologian Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464), who formed a lifelong friendship with Paolo Toscanelli whilst studying law at Padua, acknowledged the possibility of 'una religio in varietate rituum' in his *De pace fidei* (1453), whilst Marsilio Ficino argued in his *De christiana religione* (1476) that Islam necessarily presupposed an obscured, Christian truth. Italian humanists became increasingly interested in the pagan cultures of the Indies, prompted both by the rediscovery of important works by Diodorus Siculus and Strabo and reports of eastern religion by contemporary travellers, particularly the Venetian merchant Niccolò de' Conti.⁶⁴ This section will discuss the reception of the *Book* among Italian readers with an interest in non-Christian religion, exploring the considerable variation in their attitudes.

Islam

Despite the rise of the Ottoman Empire, marked by the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the invasion of Otranto in 1480, many of the Italian States sought to cultivate diplomatic, commercial and even cultural relationships with the Ottomans and the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt. This trend is reflected in Italian literary production of the fifteenth century: as we have seen in Chapter 3, romance epics such as the *Guerrin meschino* and *Orlando innamorato* increasingly portrayed a more nuanced and complex picture than the traditional Christian-Saracen binary, whilst polemical works

⁶⁴ See Juncu, *India in the Italian Renaissance*.

emphasized the moral and intellectual superiority of Christendom rather than emphasizing the dangers that Islam represented. Italian interest in the Koran led to a vernacular translation as early as 1461, although the holy text had circulated in Italy in Arabic even before this date.⁶⁵ That the earliest known surviving copy of an Italian translation is included in the *zibaldone* of the Florentine merchant Piero Vaglienti alongside the account of Marco Polo and extracts from Mandeville demonstrates a correlation of interest with medieval reports of Asia. Both the *Book* and the Koran were also read by Menocchio, the Friulian miller executed by the Inquisition for heresy in 1599 and subsequently made famous by Carlo Ginzburg.

The description of Islam is among the most commented on passages in Italian and Latin manuscripts of the *Book*, with marginalia revealing a variety of attitudes among readers. Perhaps unsurprisingly, manuscripts that circulated in ecclesiastical contexts show the clearest evidence of interest, particularly those of the staunchly orthodox Vulgate redaction. Leonisio Doglioni, the scribe of Belluno, offers numerous reflections on the text's representation of Islam: he highlights a reference to 'barborum turchorum et tartorum' with a manicule and adds the remark 'peccatores', whilst dismissing Saracen belief in the transfiguration of Christ as 'ridiculum [et] falsum'.⁶⁶ Not all readers of the Vulgate version accorded with its redactor: the scribe of Oxford Latin notes the discussion of Islam in entirely neutral terms.⁶⁷ A similarly balanced interest is present in many manuscripts of the Italian version. Bernardo Lanzavecchio, scribe of MiA, refers in his chapter heading to 'diverse bone et cative opinione con la nostra fide', whilst glosses and annotations in a number of other manuscripts draw attention to the miracles attributed to Mohammed and Saracen veneration of Mary.⁶⁸ The conversation between Sir John and the Sultan attracts attention from both Latin and vernacular readers. Unsurprisingly, there is a pattern of discernible negativity among readers of the Vulgate version. Doglioni twice notes that the Sultan's words are 'contra christianos', whilst the scribe of Oxford Latin glosses

⁶⁵ See Luciano Formisano, 'La più antica (?) traduzione italiana del *Corano* e il *Liber Habrentomi* di Ibn Tūmart in una compilazione di viaggi del primo Cinquecento', *Critica del testo* 7 (2004), 651-96. Pier Mattia Tommasino has more recently demonstrated that a translation by Antonio Neyrot da Rivoli was made in around 1460; this may have been in Italian or Latin. See 'Testimonianze sulla traduzione del Corano del beato Antonio Neyrot da Rivoli O.P. (m. 1460)', *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Latin Medieval Hispánico (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 7-10 September 2009)*, (Florence: Il Galluzzo, 2011), 259-270; p. 266.

⁶⁶ Belluno, fol. 10^r; fol. 15^r.

⁶⁷ Boldeian Latin: 'nota de fide saracenorum' (fol. 22^r).

⁶⁸ OB and PP respectively.

the passage ‘de mutuo colloquio Johannis cum Soldano equivocos’.⁶⁹ Paratextual references in vernacular manuscripts are more neutral in tone. The gloss of NYP simply notes that the *Book*’s author spoke to the Sultan, whilst the chapter heading of LBL goes as far as to mark out ‘li vituperii che’l Soldano li disse che saveva de’ cristiani’.⁷⁰

Printed copies of the Italian version of the *Book* show a similar degree of interest in Islam. The five chapter headings dedicated to Mandeville’s description of the religion are generally neutral in tone. The first of these refers directly to matters of faith, with a specific focus on belief in the afterlife, whilst the second (‘nota qui l’opinione de’ Saracini della lege’) implicitly draws attention to religious difference. In more clearly conservative manner, the Sultan’s comments on the vices of Christendom are marked as erroneous.⁷¹ Marginalia show that the colloquy continued to attract significant interest among readers, such as in Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria A.V.KK.XI.82 (Bologna: Giovanni Jacopo and Giovanni Antonio de Benedetti, 1492), where it is highlighted with marginal lines, and Venice Biblioteca Marciana Inc. 0821, where it is marked with a manicule.⁷² Comments on Islamic faith are, however, relatively sparse. The most notable instance of this is Copenhagen, Royal Library 2618 (Bologna 1488), whose annotator summarily deletes a reference to Saracen belief that Mohammed was sent as God’s prophet.⁷³ That this copy contains other annotations suggestive of a concern with religious orthodoxy indicates the reader’s negativity was not limited to Islam.

Beyond surviving copies of the *Book*, the corpus of Italian literature influenced by the text shows varying degrees of interest in – and tolerance of – Islam. Pilgrim readers who had encountered Muslims themselves regularly comment on their beliefs in negative terms, motivated perhaps by difficult personal experiences. Gabriele Capodilista contrasts his devout pilgrimage with those who travel to Mecca ‘a visitar el corpo del spurcissimo suo Machometh’.⁷⁴ The most negative account of Islam given by any Italian pilgrim reader of Mandeville is that of Alessandro Ariosto,

⁶⁹ Belluno, fol. 16^v; Oxford Latin, fol. 25^r.

⁷⁰ NYP fol. 56^v; LBL fol. 39^v.

⁷¹ M1, fol. f8^r: ‘Della legge di Maometto e della opinione de’ saracini; e Delle opinione che hanno dopo la more loro, e dove l’anima loro vada, e in qual luogo; e di qual che tengono el Paradiso è Dello inferno, e della fede che hanno’; fol. g2^r: ‘Delle parole che li disse el Soldano in secreto, le quali ne/ci confondano’.

⁷² Fol. e4^r.

⁷³ Fol. d7^r.

⁷⁴ Anna Laura Lepschy ed., p. 227.

a Franciscan from Ferrara who undertook two pilgrimages to Jerusalem in the 1460s and late 1470s, where he read the *Book* in a Latin redaction. Fabio Uliana has noted that his *Itinerarium* is animated ‘dalla precisa volontà di rivelare e annunciare apertamente il messaggio di Cristo’, a task which for the staunchly orthodox Ariosto included a lengthy invective against Islam.⁷⁵ In contrast to the rest of the text Ariosto makes no reference here to any of his sources, although it is notable that the passage comes at the same point in the textual itinerary – following the description of the Holy Land and before the journey further east – as the *Book*. The dialogue, which opens with Alessandro expressing his wish that all Saracens turn to Christ, details the prevalence of Islam among eastern peoples, the lack of study of human or divine letters, and a lengthy list of errors in religious practice, concluding that Islam is ‘abominable’ and ‘obscene’.⁷⁶ Although there is little indication that Ariosto used the *Book* as a direct model, his attitude towards Islam certainly reflects that of the Vulgate redaction. Clearer evidence still of a negative attitude towards Islam can be found in Giovanni da Fontana’s *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus*, in which Mohammed is described as a deceitful ‘contradictor of the truth’ and the Koran is identified as blasphemous.⁷⁷ Like the translator of the Vulgate redaction that he consulted, Giovanni also critiques the Saracen understanding of the nature of Paradise, dismissing this as a foolish tale that is easily believed.⁷⁸ Although he makes no direct reference to Mandeville in this passage, his detailed comments on the *Book* elsewhere in the *Liber* suggest that he was familiar with its account of Islam.

Judaism

Although the ancient and medieval Italian Jewish population had been focused in Rome and the south of the peninsula, the Renaissance saw increasing migration to the northern cities, especially following the arrival of Sephardic Jews in 1490s.⁷⁹ Anti-

⁷⁵ Fabio Uliana, ‘Introduzione’, *Itinerarium*, p. 23.

⁷⁶ Ariosto, *Itinerarium*, p. 239: ‘Ita ne foeda et obscena est Maumetho lex atque doctrina’.

⁷⁷ Fontana, *Liber*, f. 138^v: ‘Et si Mauchmeth, perfidus et inimicus veritatis contradictor in suo alchorano, quem vocat collectarium preceptorum dei fateat unum esse dominum colendum atque supremum universorum testamentum vetus et Evangelium verum esse blasphemavit’.

⁷⁸ Fontana, *Liber*, f. 137^r: ‘Audivisti fabulam atque stultitiam saracenorum et infidelium, quam bene depingunt et facile sperant’.

⁷⁹ See Moses A. Shulvass, ‘The Jewish Population in Renaissance Italy’, *Jewish Social Studies* 13, 1 (1951), 2-44.

Semitism continued to be an everyday reality, but the Jewish population was in many ways closely integrated into society, practising a wide variety of trades and developing a rich and unique textual culture. The complexity and nuance of Christian-Jewish relationships in Italy at this time is reflected by the growing prominence of Jewish scholars and a simultaneous interest in Jewish antiquity. This was particularly the case in Florence, where humanists such as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola accrued great collections of Judaic literature in exploring the concept of *prisca theologia* and the Hermetic tradition.⁸⁰ Evidence of the *Book*'s appeal in this context can be found in a manuscript belonging to the humanist scholar Yohanan Alemanno.⁸¹ Born in northern Italy around 1435, Alemanno studied at Mantua and Ferrara, where he developed a strong interest in ancient philology that was honed through his translation of Hebrew texts for the prominent Gonzaga family. Later, Alemanno was present in Florence from 1488 onwards as a tutor to the Da Pisa family, where he translated a number of works for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.⁸² Alemanno's engagement with Mandeville has recently been brought to light in an article by Fabrizio Lelli, who observes the presence of a number of extracts from the *Book*, translated into Hebrew, in Alemanno's *Liqqutim*, a *zibaldone*-style manuscript now conserved in the Bodleian Library.⁸³ The extracts in question appear in the margins of two folios containing passages from Jewish authors on the Holy Land. Highly selective in content, they are a paraphrase rather than a true translation, and refer to a number of subjects in keeping with Alemanno's intellectual formation, including a note on the tomb of Hermes in Constantinople that corresponds to broader humanist interest in the Hermetic tradition. This is followed by the section on

⁸⁰ Giannozzo Manetti's *Apologeticus*, written in the 1450s, was 'one of the first humanistic examples of a philological investigation of biblical history'. See Fabrizio Lelli, 'Jews, Humanists and the Reappraisal of Pagan Wisdom Associated with the Ideal of the *Dignitas Hominis*' in Alison Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson eds., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 49-70 (p. 51).

⁸¹ There is some evidence of Italian Jewish interest in similar texts. One of the two extant Hebrew manuscripts of the Prester John letter was made in 1442 and based on the Italian text. See Edward Ullendorf and Charles Beckingham, *The Hebrew Letters of Prester John* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁸² On the relationship between the two, see B. C. Novak, 'Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Jochanan Alemanno', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982), 125-47 and Fabrizio Lelli, 'Yohanan Alemanno, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola e la cultura ebraica italiana del XV secolo', in G. C. Garfagnini ed., *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Convegno internazionale di studi nel cinquecentesimo anniversario della morte (1494-1994)* (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 303-325.

⁸³ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Regio 23. For a transcription of the Hebrew in parallel with Zambrini, see Lelli, 'La versione ebraica abrégée des *Voyages* de Jean de Mandeville, réalisée par Yohanan Alemanno' in Charles Le Blanc e Luisa Simonutti eds., *Le masque de l'écriture* (Geneva: Droz, 2015), pp. 169-86.

differences between the Greek and Latin rites and a number of extracts referring to the lore and topography of Egypt and the Holy Land. As Lelli notes, Alemanno omits references to Christianity, except in the passage on the Greek and Latin rites, where he highlights similarities between Orthodox Christianity and Judaism. This shows that Alemanno could ignore not only the anti-Semitic elements of the texts but also its broader Christian motivation – further evidence of the degree to which Italian readers were highly selective in their engagement with the *Book*.

Beyond this unique example, there is only limited evidence for the interest of Italian readers in the *Book*'s portrayal of Judaism. Italian manuscripts and printed copies contain relatively few instances of annotation or other forms of marginalia referring to the Jews. One of few examples is Venice, Biblioteca Marciana Inc. 0821, where Mandeville's description of the massacre of the Jews by the army of Titus, is underlined, with an accompanying note drawing attention to the 'occisione di Iudei'.⁸⁴ This pattern conforms to a broader picture of indifference towards Judaism in the text's European circulation, which Tzanaki describes as a 'major difference between the text and its reception'.⁸⁵ Consistent with this trend, the chapter headings in the Italian printed editions either ignore mentions of Judaism or present them as simply another aspect of the *Book*'s marvellous content.⁸⁶

Pagan religion

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Italian humanists turned increasingly to reports of the encounters of classical antiquity with the pagan East.⁸⁷ Petrarch's discussion of the Brahmins in his *De vita solitaria* is one example of this, and indicates a broader interest in the notion of the 'virtuous pagan' that can also be observed in Dante. Alongside classical sources, some scholars also sought out more recent reports of pagan religion. Poggio Bracciolini included a developed report of Niccolò de' Conti's travels in his *De varietate fortunae* (1447), although he ignored the accounts of other travellers in order to better represent the Venetian as a unique

⁸⁴ Fol. c6^r. The annotator also notes the identification of Gog and Magog with the lost tribes of Israel.

⁸⁵ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 251.

⁸⁶ For example, Gog and Magog are mentioned within a list of other marvels: 'Del paese di Chadissa e delle cose che ivi nascono e delli monti Caspii ne li quali sono richiusi li iudei e de molte altre cose'.

⁸⁷ On this subject, see in particular Juncu, *India in the Italian Renaissance*.

source.⁸⁸ The proliferation of printed reports from the New World also fostered popular interest in the religion and customs of pagan peoples, although as the previous chapter has demonstrated medieval accounts of the East continued to shape popular attitudes: the *Book*'s sympathetic portrayal of pagan religion circulated alongside more recent accounts, such as the *Paesi nuovamente ritrovati* (1507) and Ludovico da Varthema's *Itinerario* (1510).⁸⁹

Evidence from manuscripts suggests that Italian readers were, however, interested in *mirabilia* rather than in pagan religious belief. Those annotations that highlight religious aspects generally refer to Mandeville's description of the strange islands of the Indian Ocean, with little attention accorded to the more prosaic account of Mongol religion. Whilst funeral customs and sexual morality attract some interest, the clearest signs of positive or negative judgment are associated with religious practice. As elsewhere, Leonisio Doglioni's annotations of Belluno are strongly orthodox, highlighting the idolatry of the inhabitants of Palombe ('gens bestialis adorans bovem') and denouncing pagan belief in the afterlife as 'falsa perfidia et abusio diabolica'.⁹⁰ Vernacular readers on the whole reveal a more objective attitude. The gloss of NYP refers to 'la processione mirabile' undertaken by pagan pilgrims before the Juggernaut. The inhabitants of Bragmey – perhaps a more acceptable example of piety, given their association with humanism and the long-established Alexander tradition – are identified as 'gente bona' on a number of occasions.⁹¹ Other manuscripts reveal a degree of indifference. The scribe of LBL completely ignores matters of pagan religion, noting only that the pagan customs of Cana make for diverting reading.⁹² In PP, meanwhile, pagan pilgrims in southern India are tellingly misidentified as Saracens.⁹³

The clearest evidence of a negative attitude towards pagan religion among readers of the Italian version can be found in OB (1442). In addition to critical comments on Eastern Christianity, numerous annotations in the same hand indicate instances of 'male usanze' among pagan peoples, particularly the inhabitants of the

⁸⁸ See Juncu, *India in the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 93-118.

⁸⁹ Juncu notes that 'the need to tone down negative reactions to paganism is particularly evident in the Italian Mandeville text' (*India in the Italian Renaissance*, p. 75). The examples she gives, however, are representative of the entire Continental branch of the text.

⁹⁰ Fols. 2^r and 34^r respectively.

⁹¹ OB f. 129^v: 'gente bona'; MiA 108r: 'bona gente et devotissima secundo sua lege'.

⁹² F. 47^r: '[...] de l'isola de Cana dove se adora diverse cosse che bello lezer'.

⁹³ F. PP, 27^r: 'de uno ydolo ove li saraxini vano in peregrinagio'.

islands of the Indian Ocean.⁹⁴ Perhaps surprisingly the annotator praises the faith of the Bragmans, although his observation that they observe the Ten Commandments suggests this is prompted by a perceived proximity to Christianity.⁹⁵ Stronger condemnation of pagan belief, however, can be found in a set of Latin annotations written in a second hand. These accompany the passage in which Mandeville uses the example of Job to set out his views on the justification of pagans. In a comment that is partially obscured by the binding, the annotator questions the validity of drawing an analogy between Job's position with regards to Judaism and that of idolaters and 'true' Christianity.⁹⁶ Below this, a second annotation in the same hand marks what is possibly the strongest instance of negative judgment in any manuscript annotation, arguing that Mandeville's position is heretical.⁹⁷ The picture that emerges is of an educated, theologically informed reader with a firmly orthodox standpoint strongly opposed to the *Book's* overtures towards non-Catholic forms of Christianity and eastern religion: an attitude commensurate with the dating of the hand to the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Italian printed corpus similarly offers evidence of varied attitudes towards paganism. Although some of the chapter headings refer to pagan beliefs in negative terms – the heading for the island of Mulcha, for instance, details the 'cativissima gente che bevano sangue de homini'⁹⁸ – the majority of these are neutral. However, the cannibalism of the inhabitants of Lamory, described in the *Book* as an 'evil custom', is reported in entirely dispassionate fashion. Many of the headings are entirely neutral in tone, with the terms 'maniere' and 'usanza' frequently used without explicit positive or negative connotation.⁹⁹ An instance of textual corruption in the Venetian branch in which 'pigmei' are replaced with 'pagani' may be a case of simple misreading, but it also suggests a somewhat homogenous perception of the eastern world. In contrast to the degree of interest shown in Islam, annotations referring to pagan religion and morality are limited, although where present they indicate a largely

⁹⁴ For example, 'Mulcha ysola dove cativa gente e cativa costuma' (fol. 51^v) and 'Dondino ysola dove la gente e de mala natura e anno diverse usanze' (fol. 52^v).

⁹⁵ Fol. 76^r: 'Una isola dove sono bone gente per ogni rispetto e serva li deci commandamenti chiamata terra de fede'.

⁹⁶ Fol. 77^r: 'non est par ratio ut comparatio ab idolatris vel [illegible] ad christiani qui [illegible] a sancto Job ad iudeos et qui querit dicta sanctorum [illegible]'.

⁹⁷ Ibid.: 'hic dicitur auctor tenere contra ecclesiam et hinc hereticam opinionem'.

⁹⁸ M1, fol. 17^r.

⁹⁹ For example, the heading for Lamory: 'De l'isola Lamori e de la gente che ivi habita e la rasone perché vano nudi e come mangiano carne humana e quanti gradi e' tutto il firmamento'.

balanced viewpoint: one reader of BAV Inc. IV. 263 identifies Bragmey as ‘una ixola piena di virtu e buon chostumi’.¹⁰⁰

Italian readers of the *Book* exhibited varying degrees of interest in its representation of non-Christian religion. Whilst the description of Islam is among the most commented on passages in manuscript and printed copies of the *Book*, references to Judaism appear to have attracted little interest. Passages detailing pagan religion received a degree of attention, although on the whole readers of the Italian version were attracted more by their marvellous nature than a developed theological interest. The most developed comments on non-Christian religion tend to be negative judgments, often made by religious readers and particularly those who encountered the text in the Vulgate redaction. As the final section of this chapter will investigate, the orthodox religious environment of post-Tridentine Italy was to establish an increasingly critical attitude towards the *Book*.

Counter-Reformation concerns

The reform brought about by the Council of Trent exerted a profound influence on vernacular literary culture in Italy. Alongside the works of heretical authors, the Pauline Index (1559) banned authors whose works were deemed to foster anticlerical sentiment.¹⁰¹ Although this period corresponds with the waning of the *Book*’s prominence in Italy, there is little evidence to suggest that the Counter-Reformation was a decisive factor in this change of fortune. The text does not appear in the papal indices of the sixteenth century, nor on any local index, such as those published in Milan in 1538 and Lucca in 1545. Given the extent of Mandeville’s popularity in the early sixteenth century, this might be interpreted as surprising. Elements of anticlerical thought are clearly present throughout the *Book*, and Mandeville’s acceptance of earthly religious diversity was at odds with the Council’s condemnation of heterodoxy and identification of the natural law as insufficient for justification. However, it must be remembered that the *Book* is in many ways a profoundly Catholic text, presented as a guide to the Jerusalem pilgrimage written by a pious

¹⁰⁰ Fol. k3^r.

¹⁰¹ The Tridentine Index of 1564 moderated its more radical predecessor by allowing many works to be published and sold in expurgated form.

English knight.¹⁰² Perhaps more tellingly, the *Book*'s production had been in decline since the mid-1530s, with the penultimate and final Italian editions issued at Venice in 1554 and 1567.

In spite of this, there is evidence that many Italian readers were aware of and reacted to unorthodox elements within the *Book*. A cautious attitude towards this can be observed as early as the 1470s, with the exordium of MiA containing a unique interpolation in the narratorial voice defending the inclusion of non-scriptural material.¹⁰³ Evidence of similar circumspection appears in a copy of the Venetian edition of 1553, now conserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Padua, which contains an annotation on the title page observing that 'in questa opera vi sono molte cose dettate dalla semplicità d'un'ottima intenzione. Allora non si sapeva di più'.¹⁰⁴ As this chapter has already explored, readers of the *Book* also expressed their disapproval of its contents by leaving annotations and other marks. The most striking example of this appears in OB, with Latin annotations in a sixteenth-century hand criticizing Eastern Christian rites and going as far as to mark Mandeville's suggestion of the possibility of salvation for pagans as a 'heretical opinion' (as noted above). Readers also reacted to the *Book*'s representation of moral and religious diversity by expurgating individual passages or chapters. In addition to the deletion of the description of Islam in Copenhagen, Royal Library Inc. 2618 (discussed above), a copy of the Venetian edition of 1496 held in the Bodleian contains an instance of methodical expurgation.¹⁰⁵ Here, the chapter describing an island in the Indian Ocean where husbands pay other men to sleep with their wives on their wedding night is heavily cancelled in blank ink, with a paper pastedown covering the chapter title. Whilst there are no indicators of identity, the absence of the *Book* from published indices does not preclude the possibility that the expurgation was carried out under the auspices of the Inquisition: the Tridentine Index prohibited individuals from

¹⁰² Indeed, Donald Lach observes that the *Book* met with greater criticism in Protestant countries, where it was often seen as a papist text. See Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965-93), II, ii, p. 331.

¹⁰³ MiA, fol. 3^r: 'Perche la presente nostra narratione e circa la materia de la passione del nostro signore yhu xpo impero per dilecto de li auditore o deliberato inserire e narare certe perticule de le quale la scriptura sancta non fa alcuna mentione'.

¹⁰⁴ Padua Universitaria 104.b.199/2, a1r.

¹⁰⁵ Oxford, Bodleian M-056.

amending their own books, and inquisitors regularly abridged works that were not officially prohibited.¹⁰⁶

Although evidence for Italian engagement with the *Book* in the late sixteenth century is relatively sparse, one exceptional instance reveals that it continued to exert an influence on popular religious thought in this period. The case of the Friulian miller Domenico Scandella, better known as Menocchio, was first brought to light in Carlo Ginzburg's seminal *Il formaggio e i vermi* (1976). The verbatim records for the Menocchio's trials before the Inquisition in 1583 and again in 1599 offer a unique insight into the worldview of a semi-literate peasant whose unique understanding of the cosmos was influenced by longstanding oral traditions and popular print culture.¹⁰⁷ Much has been written concerning Menocchio's trial, beliefs and cultural milieu, and I intend here only to offer some brief reflections on his engagement with the *Book*, a text that he commented on extensively during his first trial.

In September 1583, several inhabitants of the village of Montereale, near Pordenone, denounced Menocchio to the Holy Office. He was accused amongst other offences of denying Christ's virgin birth, spreading anti-clerical sentiment and, most seriously of all, of 'preaching and dogmatising' heretical ideas to his fellow villagers over a period of some thirty years.¹⁰⁸ For a rural miller to have encountered and adopted unorthodox beliefs in sixteenth-century Italy is not wholly surprising, particularly in rural Friuli where evangelical ideas were discussed openly in the years before Trent and more cautiously from the 1560s onwards.¹⁰⁹ However, when Menocchio was tried the following year his inquisitors were confused by the unusual nature of his beliefs. In addition to a bizarre understanding of the creation of the cosmos, he possessed a highly tolerant attitude towards religious diversity that can be understood as a form of universalism. Though Menocchio insisted throughout both trials that he had formed such thoughts 'with his own mind', he conceded that he had been influenced by a number of books. Alongside the *Decameron* (banned on the Index) and an Italian translation of the Koran, he was familiar with the *Book*, having been lent a copy of the text 'five or six years ago' by a local priest, Andrea Ionima.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 147.

¹⁰⁷ The Inquisition records from Menocchio's two trials have been edited by Andrea del Col. See *Domenico Scandella detto Menocchio: I processi dell'Inquisizione (1583-1599)* (Pordenone: Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 1990).

¹⁰⁸ Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi*, pp. 2-5.

¹⁰⁹ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. xlvii.

When called before the Inquisition on 21 March, Ionima brought with him the copy that he had given to Menocchio.¹¹⁰ Asked how he had come to be in possession of the *Book*, he claimed that he had come across it by chance in the town of Mareno; he also denied that he given the *Book* to Menocchio himself, stating that he had lent it to an intermediary named Vincenzo Lombardo, ‘che se un pocco legger’.¹¹¹ Ionima’s attitude must be attributed in part to his nervousness before the Inquisition, but his statement suggests an awareness of the text’s potentially inflammatory content, as well as revealing its continued circulation after it had ceased to be printed.

It has been suggested that Menocchio’s unusual interpretations are representative of a common process of selective reading, with Ginzburg arguing that ‘l’incontro tra pagine scritte e cultura orale formavano nella testa di Menocchio una miscela esplosiva’.¹¹² Although this is certainly the case in terms of Menocchio’s broader reading, his comments on Mandevile reveal what is largely a clear and developed understanding. Voluntarily describing the *Book* to the inquisitors, Menocchio claimed:

Et questo libro trattava del viaggio di Hierusalem et d’alcuni errori che havevano i greci col papa et trattava anco del gran Can, della città di Babilonia, del prete Giani, de Hierusalem et di molte isole che vivevano quali a un modo et quali a un altro, et che questo cavalier andò del soldano, quale lo interrogò dei preti, de’ cardinalli et del papa et delle Chieresia et diceva che Ierusalem era de’ christiani et per mal governo dei christiani et del papa Dio gliel’ha tolto.¹¹³

Whilst somewhat rambling, this description demonstrates that Menocchio remembered the *Book* largely accurately several years after he had read it. The emphasis Menocchio places on the quarrel between the Greeks and the pope and the Sultan’s critique of Christendom is particularly revealing, suggesting that

¹¹⁰ The records describe the copy as ‘quemdam librum tabulis coopertum in quarto folio, vulgari idiomate scriptum, qui dicitur *Il libro de Zuan de Mandavila*, qui quidem liber non habet principit, sed tantum incipit “Con ciò sia cosa”’ (Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 59-60). Assuming that the records are accurate, the edition in question must have been produced before 1517, after which the *Book* was printed exclusively in octavo format.

¹¹¹ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 60.

¹¹² Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi*, p. 61.

¹¹³ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 33.

Mandeville's reformist and anti-clerical ideas were central to his interest; the focus on the pope's bad government, referred to only fleetingly in the *Book*, is of particular interest. These comments also reveal that readers of low social status did not necessarily approach the *Book* simply as a book of marvels.

When asked whether the *Book* was related in any way to his ideas about the cosmos, Menocchio denied that this was the case but related its description of the island of Dondina, in which Mandeville reports the practice of cannibalistic euthanasia on those close to death.¹¹⁴ Menocchio claims that this is the origin of his opinion that 'morto il corpo, morisse anco l'anima, poiché di tante e diverse sorte di nationi, chi crede a un modo et chi a un altro.'¹¹⁵ Although this profoundly unorthodox statement is at odds with the firmly Christian foundation of the *Book*, it reveals the degree to which Mandeville's portrayal of religious diversity influenced Menocchio's understanding of the wider world and his own religious beliefs. Its suggestion of a universalist attitude is reflected elsewhere in the trial records. Ginzburg dwells in particular on the influence of Boccaccio's story of the Three Rings, in which tolerance of the Abrahamic faiths is advocated through the analogy of three sons who, receiving three seemingly identical rings from their father, are unable to distinguish the truly valuable one from the other two. The records of the second trial show that Menocchio, again unprompted, narrated the tale to his inquisitors, who were presumably stunned. When asked in the ensuing discussion which of the three faiths will be saved, Menocchio replied: 'Padre si, chiama tutti: turchi, guide, christiani, heretici et tutti igualmente'.¹¹⁶ In encompassing believers of all faiths, and even heretics, this declaration exceeds any message of tolerance present in Boccaccio's tale, and indeed the *Book* itself.

Towards the end of his first trial Menocchio admitted that reading the *Book* had caused him to err, explicitly highlighting its reports of 'tante sorte de generazione et de diverse lege, che me aveva tuto travaliato'.¹¹⁷ Although this statement must be understood in the context of Menocchio's attempt to convince

¹¹⁴ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 53: 'Quello medemo libro del cavallier Mandavilla trattava ancora che, quando gli huomini erano ammalati, vicini a morte, andavano del suo prete e quel prete scongiurava un idolo e quel idolo li diseua s'el doveva morir o no e se doveva morire, il prete lo soffocava et lo mangiavano in compagnia'.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 84.

¹¹⁷ Del Col ed., *Domenico Scandella*, p. 90.

his inquisitors that his unorthodox ideas stemmed from external sources, it indicates that Mandeville's representation of religious diversity profoundly affected his beliefs. Menocchio's case is in many ways unique, and there are few comparable sources for such developed (if unusual) theological ideas among individuals of his social standing in this period; but it reveals the extent to which the *Book* retained its popular currency and influenced religious thought even in the late sixteenth century.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the circulation of the *Book* in Italian religious contexts and the reactions of its audience to Mandeville's portrayal of religious diversity, revealing a number of key trends in the text's reception. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most negative reactions to Mandeville's representation of eastern religion came from clerical readers, particularly those who encountered the text in the conservative Vulgate Latin redaction. The evidence provided by OB indicates that religious readers of the Italian version of the *Book* could be equally critical. Lay readers also engaged with the *Book*'s descriptions of eastern faiths. Mandeville's description of Islam attracted significant attention, and there is also evidence of curiosity concerning the figure of Prester John and the pagan peoples of the Indian Ocean, albeit with a greater focus on the marvellous nature of Mandeville's reports than any specific theological considerations. There are nevertheless occasional indications of a more developed interest in aspects of eastern religion, and the exceptional case of Menocchio underlines the *Book*'s influence on popular thought concerning the salvation of non-Christians. Whilst there is only limited evidence for the *Book*'s circulation in Counter-Reformation Italy, the conservative attitude of some readers indicates that they were fully aware of its unorthodox religious message.



Figure 12: Frontispiece from Giuliano Dati's *La gran magnificencia del Prete Gianni* (Florence: Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri, 1493?)

hoc absurdum est

Lo Camino p ritornare
da la terra Santa idro
dunafro qto e lontan
dal mare e da un alen

185

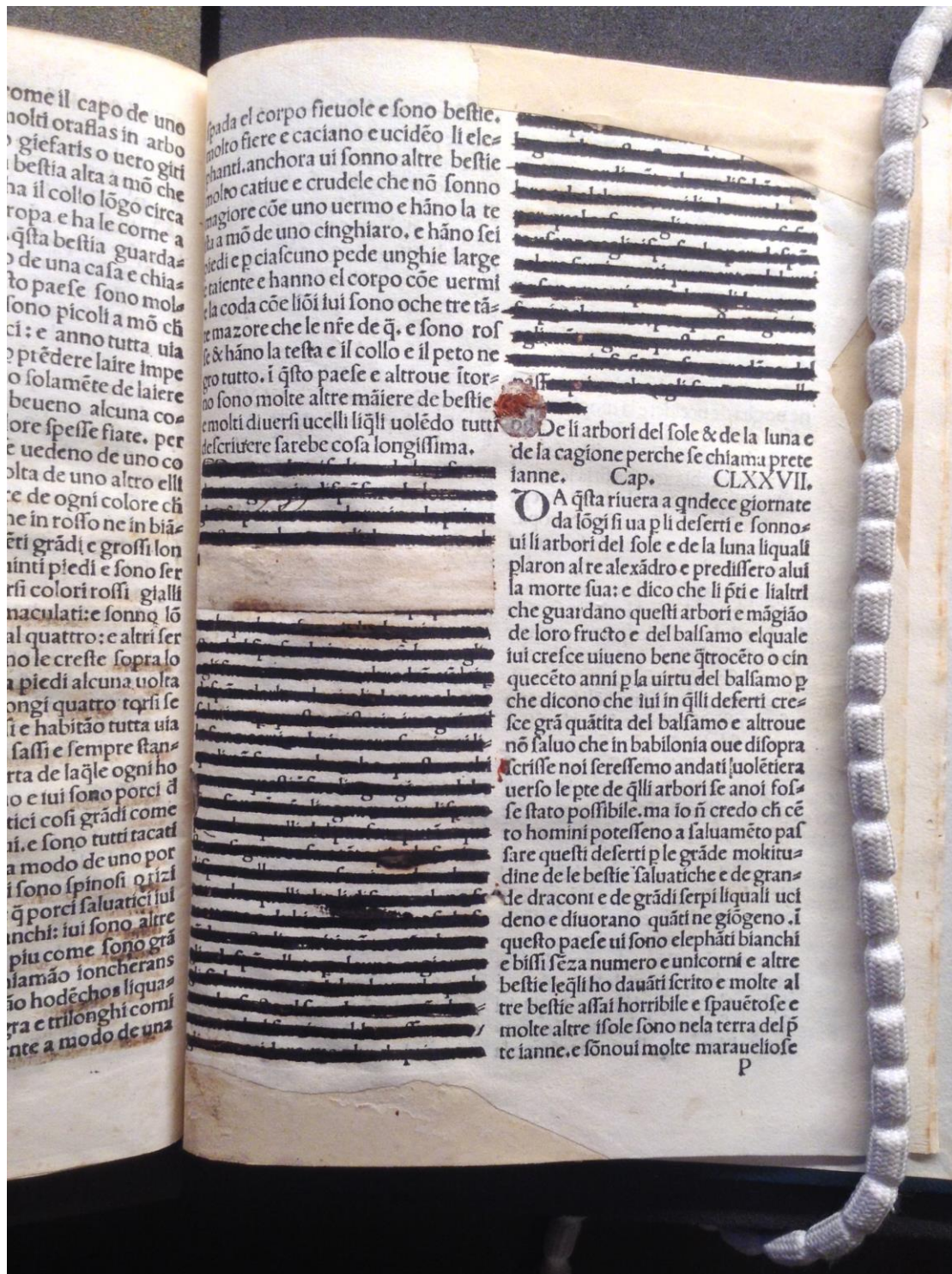


Figure 14: Expurgation of a passage concerning eastern sexual morality. Oxford, Bodleian Library M-056, *The Book of John Mandeville*, fol. p1^r.

Conclusion

In Italy, as elsewhere in Europe, by the end of the sixteenth century the *Book* had faded from its earlier position of prominence. Over the previous two hundred years it had circulated throughout the north and centre of the peninsula in a variety of different forms and contexts. Following the arrival of the French Continental text at the northern courts in the late fourteenth century, an Italian translation brought the *Book* to new and diverse groups of readers, who approached it in strikingly different ways according to their own interests and concerns. It also exerted an important impact on Latin and vernacular literary production in a variety of genres, ranging from pilgrimage guides and romance epics to imitation travel accounts and natural historical treatises. The advent of print saw the Italian version of the *Book* develop into a vernacular bestseller that rivalled the most popular works of its time, influencing the Italian worldview in a period of unparalleled popular interest in the world beyond the boundaries of Christendom. This thesis has sought to demonstrate the *Book's* dissemination and influence in Italy, and has illustrated the extent to which the Italian version can be understood as a distinct from other redactions. By way of conclusion, we now offer some focused reflections on the Italian Mandeville tradition and its place within the context of the *Book's* European circulation, examining the key findings that have emerged in the course of this study.

The first of these is the importance of Italy and of the Italian version of the *Book* within the broader European history of the text. Often overlooked by Mandeville scholars, the Italian version is a significant constituent of the *Book's* multi-textual tradition. Though relatively modest in number when compared to surviving manuscripts in French (around 60), English (44) and Dutch/German (106), Italian manuscripts (12) represent the fourth largest surviving vernacular corpus.¹ The lack of critical attention that these have received is all the more surprising when compared to the scholarship dedicated to other individual versions, such as the French Liège and English Egerton texts, which survive in much smaller concentrations. Without a doubt, the Italian print corpus

¹ These figures are taken from Higgins, *Writing East*, pp. 22-3.

constitutes a highly significant contribution to the European Mandeville tradition. The twenty-four individual editions issued in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries greatly outnumber those produced in France (14 editions), Germany (12) and England (5) in the same period.² Whilst this must be attributed in part to the early success of the Italian print industry, it is also a testament to the continued appeal of the *Book* to Italian audiences. Previous studies of Mandeville's reception have focused on the extensive manuscript corpus, yet it is clear that a full understanding of the *Book*'s place in early modern Europe can only be reached with further research into its rich print history, of which the Italian tradition is a fundamental part.³

Related to this point is the extent and variety of the Italian text's dissemination. Although the text had a limited circulation in Rome and further south, in Tuscany and the north of Italy it achieved a remarkably broad readership, from rulers and scholars to artists, artisans and merchants, encompassing men and women from lay and clerical backgrounds. The *Book* enjoyed a diverse readership elsewhere in Europe, but the large middle classes and relatively high literacy rates of the Italian cities ensured that it reached an even broader proportion of the population. There is also evidence for the *Book*'s circulation in smaller towns and rural areas, particularly in Lombardy and Tuscany. Referring to the number of surviving English manuscripts, Moseley states that 'few literate men [in England] in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries could have avoided coming across [Mandeville] at some time'.⁴ The success of the Italian version, particularly in print, must have ensured that this was also the case in Italy from the mid-fifteenth century. The number of surviving printed copies is testament both to its appeal to the literate middle classes and to the commercial acumen of Italian printers, who produced the *Book* in affordable editions that were marketed to appeal to a broad readership. In recent years, scholars of the Italian Renaissance have highlighted the ways in which medieval texts retained their

² In addition to the *Book*, a French lapidary attributed to Mandeville was also printed five times between the late fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century. This remains similarly understudied. See David A. Shaw, 'An Unidentified French Incunable: Sir John Mandeville, *Le lapidaire en francoys* [Lyon: c. 1495-1496]', *The Electronic British Library Journal* 2012, <<http://www.bl.uk/ebj/2012articles/article6.html>>.

³ Other significant versions of the text, such as the Czech redaction (7 manuscripts and 5 printed editions) remain similarly unexplored.

⁴ Moseley, 'Availability of Mandeville's Travels in England', p. 126.

currency, often blurring the lines between popular and intellectual cultures.⁵ This thesis has shown that Mandeville circulated in Italy in a variety of intellectual contexts: at the Medici and Este courts, associated with humanist scholarship; among an educated elite associated with universities, including individuals such as Gabriele Capodilista and Ugo Ruggerio; and in the private collections of scholars such as Leonardo da Vinci, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli and Ulisse Aldrovandi. As understandings of the boundaries between elite and popular culture in this period continue to develop and become more nuanced, it is clear that in crossing social boundaries the *Book* enjoyed a privileged status.

The accessibility of the *Book* to a broad audience is also reflected in the evolution of the Italian version across manuscript and print: from its translation from the French Continental text in a manner deliberately geared towards facilitating comprehension to the editorial interventions of Ugo Ruggerio who, in his editions of 1488, provided vernacular translations of Latin phrases and corrected the garbled phrasing of the *editio princeps*. The presentation of Florentine editions as ‘ridotto in lingua Toscana’ and the correction of sixteenth-century editions to comply with Tuscan orthography similarly situate the Italian *Book* in the context of growing interest in the role and status of the vernacular. It is also notable that, in contrast to northern Europe, where Latin and vernacular versions of the text continued to circulate together, by the middle of the fifteenth century the Italian redaction had all but replaced the Vulgate and French Continental redactions among clerical, scholarly and courtly audiences. Sir John’s claim in the exordium that he composed the *Book* in the vernacular to ensure its accessibility finds strong support in its Italian circulation, and there can be little doubt that this vernacular status contributed to its extraordinary success.

Turning more specifically to modalities of reception, this study has shown how Italian readers approached the *Book* in very different ways. From real and virtual pilgrims who used the text to construct their own devotional itineraries to merchants intrigued by its reports of spices and riches, from geographers and natural historians to priests and writers of romance, the *Book*’s multi-textuality is reflected in the variety

⁵ On this, see Peter Burke, ‘Learned Culture and Popular Culture in Renaissance Italy’, in *The Renaissance in Europe: A Reader*, ed. by Keith Whitlock (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 73-81; reprinted from Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 124-35.

of approaches evidenced in surviving copies and secondary sources. Nevertheless, several recurring patterns denote broader trends in the *Book's* Italian reception. The first of these is the extent to which the *Book's* inclusion of varied material is reflected in the interests of individual readers. Annotations have played an important role in this study as indicators of patterns in reading habits, yet they also reveal that, beyond their predominant concerns, readers often valued several aspects of the text. Manuscripts that display evidence of interest in the Jerusalem pilgrimage often include annotations referring to the inhabitants and marvels of lands further to the east; those that circulated in mercantile or courtly contexts similarly include comments on devotional episodes and religious diversity, as well as tradable goods or romance episodes. On specific occasions, annotations expose the juxtaposition of other seemingly distinct interests. Notes in the Vulgate manuscript copied by the deacon Leonisio Doglioni, for instance, reveal that he paid close attention to episodes describing devotional practices yet also highlighted numerous references to the romance hero Ogier the Dane. This pattern of multiple, overlapping interests can also be observed in surviving printed copies of the *Book*, in which a predominant interest in eastern marvels is often nuanced by comments on the holy sites in Jerusalem or the description of Islam. Chapter 2 has explored how the marvellous and devotional work together in the *Book*, but beyond this it is clear that, for many Italian readers, interest in one specific aspect of the text did not preclude a broader appreciation of its encyclopaedic form.

A further aspect of the *Book's* influence that is shown particularly clearly in an Italian context is its impact on the production of writing about travel. It became a model onto which pilgrim writers and readers mapped their own physical and mental journeys, and was used and imitated by authors in a range of genres in their creation of fictional itineraries. Fifteenth-century works from the pilgrimage accounts of Gabriele Capodilista and Michele da Figline to the *Guerrin meschino* and Jacopo da Sanseverino's *Libro piccolo* demonstrate how Mandeville shaped the Italian understanding of the form and function of the travel account at a time of fundamental importance for the genre's codification. In print, this influence manifested itself in the ways in which Italian printers referenced the *Book* in the paratextual representation of accounts of recent discoveries. Elsner and Rubiés have noted how the *Book* 'persistently points back towards Marco Polo and beyond him, in a way which is extremely significant for the history of travel literature in late medieval Europe',

whilst Tim Youngs has observed its role in moving from the medieval paradigms of crusade and pilgrimage towards the more modern features of observed experience and curiosity towards other cultures.⁶ Evidence for the interest of Italian readers in these themes also reveals that the *Book* helped to transform the ways in which travel accounts were read. Its unparalleled prominence in Italy during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries helped to establish the appeal of printed travel writing. The focus of Italian printers on emphasizing marvellous and exotic elements of the text influenced the presentation of accounts of the New World, and anticipates an approach to travel writing as a form of escapism more commonly linked with the twentieth century.

It seems fitting in conclusion to return to what it perhaps the most obvious question that can be asked of Mandeville's reception: did Italian readers really accept the *Book's* account of the eastern world as accurate? In her study of the *Book's* European reception, Tzanaki concludes that the *Book* began to lose its credibility in the mid-sixteenth century.⁷ In Italy this seems to have been broadly the case, but the individuals and groups of readers examined in this study offer us a more nuanced understanding. In a scholarly context, a degree of caution surrounding the *Book's* most fantastical claims can be observed as early as the mid-fifteenth century, evidenced by the marginalization of the text from cartographic production and the comments of humanist scholars such as Giovanni da Fontana and Alessandro Ariosto. It is noteworthy, however, that neither altogether dismisses the *Book* as a source, and that both are most critical of Mandeville where he relates second-hand information: Ariosto, for instance, remarks on the Earthly Paradise that it is impossible for human eyes to see Paradise and that 'for this reason it is easy to refute that which John Mandeville claims'.⁸ Such criticisms reveal the extent to which accurate eyewitness observation had become the standard by which travel accounts were judged, as reflected in Ramusio's decision to discard the accounts of Mandeville and Polo on the grounds that they were not corroborated by more recent reports.⁹ This same standard, however, also ensured that the *Book* continued to be seen as a relevant source well

⁶ Elsner and Rubiés, 'Introduction', *Voyages and Visions*, p. 39; Tim Youngs, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, pp. 1-16 (p. 3).

⁷ Tzanaki, *Mandeville's Medieval Audiences*, p. 269.

⁸ Ariosto, *Itinerarium*, p. 360: 'qua ratione facile refellitur quod a Ioanne Mandavilla traditum est, in orientali Indiae plaga Paradisi locus prospici'.

⁹ See Chapter 4. Ramusio would later change his mind about Polo, including his account in the *Navigazioni e viaggi* precisely because its accuracy had been confirmed by more recent travellers.

into the sixteenth century. There is little if any evidence to suggest that Italian readers questioned the identity of Sir John or his claim to have travelled the world. Rather, the *Book's* most far-fetched claims were either seen as embellishments or attributed to Mandeville's own credulity. The engagement of Ulisse Aldrovandi with the *Book*, albeit with a healthy dose of circumspection, is paralleled by that of his erudite European contemporaries, including Richard Hakluyt, Gerardus Mercator and Abraham Ortelius.

At a more popular level, a similar picture emerges of a general acceptance of the *Book* coupled with individual instances of critical attitudes. Ruggerio's amendment to his second edition of 1488 shows that the text's accuracy was questioned by some in an early print audience. However, the fact that the height of the *Book's* popularity came precisely at the point that accounts of more recent discoveries were beginning to circulate indicates that popular perceptions of the East continued to be dominated by medieval paradigms long after the voyages of Columbus and Vespucci.¹⁰ There is also evidence that, like educated readers, the *Book's* broader audience increasingly emphasized the text's value as a first-hand report, with Sir John's eyewitness status commented on or underlined in a number of printed copies.¹¹ Similarly, whilst some sixteenth-century readers marked their reservations regarding the accuracy of the *Book's* content – such as one annotator who noted 'molte cose dettate dalla semplicità d'un'ottima intenzione' – Mandeville appears to have slowly ceded his place as more up-to-date accounts gradually transformed the Italian worldview.¹²

Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Italian reception of Mandeville was shaped by changing expectations of the eastern world. Yet the *Book* also made a profound contribution both to the development of the Italian worldview and to the way in which travel was imagined and written about, ensuring a legacy that has lasted well beyond the sixteenth century. Returning to Franco Cardini's assessment of Mandeville as an 'autore italico', the extent of the Italian version's circulation and influence clearly indicates that it should be considered alongside better

¹⁰ On this subject, see in particular Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, pp. 52-86.

¹¹ For example, the annotator of Rome, BAV Stamp. Ross. 4815 (Venice, 1504) underlines Sir John's claim to have observed the Antarctic pole star himself; a manicule also draws attention to his claim to have described many countries that he has seen.

¹² Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria 104.b.199/2, fol. a1^r.

established proponents of Italian travel writing.¹³ And beyond this, such a unique constituent of the *Book*'s broader multi-textual history – translated, adapted, copied and printed by Italians – must be recognized both for its influence on and, arguably, its position within the canon of Italian Renaissance literature.

¹³ See Chapter 1.

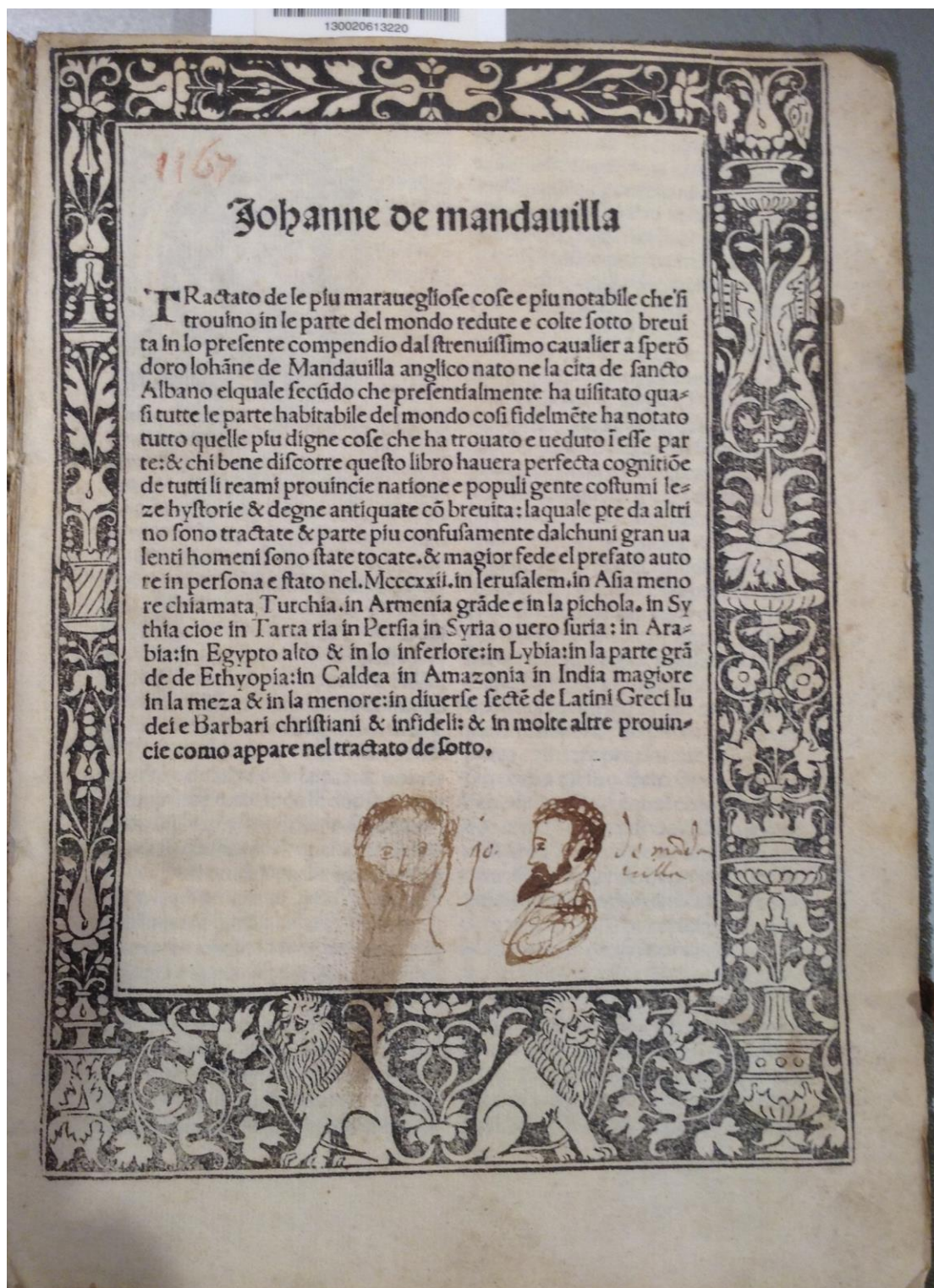


Figure 15: A reader's impression of Sir John (Copenhagen, Royal Library Inc. 2619, *The Book of John Mandeville*, fol. a1r).

Appendix

Manuscripts of the Italian version of the *Book*¹

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashb. 1699 (FL)

Late fourteenth century. Paper, 200x290mm, ff. 2+60+2. Cursive gothic book hand. Decorative initials in red and blue ink.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Adsit principio virgo Maria meo. Cum cio sia sia (sic.) cosa che la terra ultramarine çoe terra sancta de promissione fra tutte le altre terre è piu eccellente et donna sopra le altre terre...’

No colophon.

Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1917 (FR)

1492. Paper, 297x225 mm, ff. 2+87+2. Cursive humanist hand. Decorative initials in blue and red ink.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Con cio sia cosa che la terra oltramarina cioe la sancta terra di promissione, tra tucte le altre terre sia la piu escellente et la piu degna et donna sopra tucte le altre terre...’

fol. 87^v, colophon: ‘Io Bartolomeo da Benci da Dichomano al presente provigionato nella roccha vecchia del Borgho San Sipolcho ho scripto questo libro coè finito de scrivere questo di .xx. di giugno .1492. a stança di Raffaello di Michele di Chorso ciptadino fiorentino’

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Magl. XXXV 221 (FN)

Post-1503. Paper, 210x142mm, ff. 2+157+1. Cursive humanist hand. Decorative initials in red ink.

fol. 61^r, incipit: ‘Concio sie cosa chella terra oltramarina cioe la terra sancta di promissione’

fol. 151^v, colophon: ‘Finito il libro belliximo de Giovanni Mandivilla ridocto in lingua thoscana. Laus deo omnipotenti. Amen’.

¹ All manuscripts were consulted in person, with the exception of MoS, NYP and KK, for which digital reproductions were viewed.

London, British Library MS Add. 41329 (LBL)

10 March 1469. Paper, 285x205mm, ff. 2+111+1. Gothic cursive. Decorative initials in red and blue ink. Contains marginalia.

fol. 3^r, incipit: ‘Questo libero fo conposto per uno nobilissimo cavaler dingeltera chiamato per nome miser Zuane de Mediavila el quale se parti de lixola dingeltera per andare per sua devotion in tera santa alla nobele zitade de Jeruxalem al Santo Sepulchro et partisse dellan 1322 del mexe de Sepembre et zonto a Jeruxalem se despoxe totaliter non se partire che el vederia tuto el paexe e tute le devotion come ordinatamente qui desstoto el ditto miser Zuane da Mediavila de notera et chiunque leçera sene trovasse erore niuno coregialo et concilo pero da quello tenpo a questo poria essere state molte cose et questo ho principiato achopiar adi 10 Marzo 1469. Dovete sapere che la tera Santa de promissione sopra tute le altre ella piu degna...’

fol. 90^v, colophon: ‘Finito libro referemus gratia Cristo’

Mantua, Biblioteca Teresiana MS 126 (MaC)

1432. Parchment, 250x185mm, ff. 2+85+2. Littera textualis. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Com cio sia cossa che la terra oltra mare zoe la sancta terra de promissione’

fol. 71^r, colophon: ‘Compilatione fornita questo di .xi. de dicembre .1432. in Venesia per me Anthonio de Matheo de Corado de Cardino da Fiorenze per lo referir de ser Cristofallo Fioravante et ser Nicholo de Michielle veneciani, trovatosi ali presenti periculi como prolixamente se dechiara’

Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS H 188 inf. (MiA)

1478. Paper, 300x225mm, ff. 5+109+5. Gothic cursive.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Con cio sia cossa che la terra ultramarina, cioe la terra de promissione, fra tutte le altre terre sia la piu eccellente et la piu degna sopra tutte le altre terre...’

fol. 101^r, colophon: ‘In nomine domini incipit liber seu tabula libri regionarii de mirabilibus mundi visis et diligenter examinatis per dominum Iohanem de Mandavila militem sacratum templi sancti iohannis Rhodi. De capitulum in capitulum distinctus per me Bernardum Lanzavegiam grammaticae professorem’.

Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS Ital. 1009 (MoS)

1573?. Paper, 198x131mm, ff. 1+141+1. Gothic cursive. Contains marginalia. Badly damaged.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Con cio [...] e la sancta terra [...] altre terre e la piu exce [...] et donna sopra tute le altre terre’

No colophon.

Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale MS XII D 57 (NN)

1467. Paper, 290x210mm, ff. 1+79+1. Gothic cursive. Space left for decorative initials (incomplete).

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'Opus domini Iohannis de Mandevilla militis crucis sancte nutriti in Anglia in civitate Sancti Albani de mirabilibus in passu ultramarinis incipit feliciter. Con cio sia cosa che la terra ultra mare zoe la sancta terra de promissione...'

fol. 79^r, colophon: 'Hoc opus ego notarius Stephanus Iohannis de Lecto ad instanciam Magistri Leonardi de Legistis de Aquila, locumtenentis illustrissimi et excellentis domini Mathei de Capua, ducis Adrie comitisque palatini, propria manu scripsi die penultimo junij .xv.e. indicionis anno domini .M.cccc.lxvii.'

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS Morgan 746 (NYP)

1465. Parchment, 270x190mm, ff. 138. Humanist book hand. Fol. 1^r illuminated with coat of arms and floral border. Initials decorated in red and blue ink throughout. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'Dovete sapere che la terra oltramare cioe la sancta terra de promissione fra tute le altre si e la piu eccellente et la piu [degn]a et dona...'

fol. 138^v, colophon: 'Questo libro he stato scritto per mane de Nicholo Mascharino de lano 1465 in Ferrara'

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. C. 252 (OB)

1442. Paper, 310x220mm, ff. 1+87+1. Littera textualis. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'In cristi nomine amen. Chi volle andare ala terra sancta dove el nostro signore Iesu Cristo fuy preso flagelato crucifix e sepelito e per quante vie e porte se ge çire e dapoy chi vole sapere deli paesi de Babilonia del gran soldano del gran cane e del prete Jani e de lor paise signoria e ponssanza lezera questo libro e vedera cosse assay e quasi incredibile. Con cio sia cosa che la terra oltramarina cioe la sancta terra de promissione...'

fol. 83^r, colophon: 'Per non stare hociosso ne cadere in desperacione io me sono messo a scrivere per mia reperacione chi de questo e casson Cristo felice li perdoni Antonio del Gayo do [sic.] la cuntra de Sam Quilicho scripsi delanno de 1442 del messe de zenaro e finite a ultimo de febraro del medemo suprascripto. Deo gratias amen. Laus deo pax vivis et requies defunctis amen. Qui scripsit hunc librum anima eius tendat ad paradissum amen'

Lawrence, Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library (University of Kansas) MS C. 20 (KK)

Fifteenth century. Paper, 218x153mm, ff. 20. Gothic cursive. Fragment of a manuscript, in poor condition.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Con zio sia che la terra oltramarina, zioe la terra santa di [...] tutte le altre terre la piu excelente e la piu degna e dona sopra tute le altre tere...’

No colophon.

Parma, Biblioteca Palatina MS Parm. 1070 (PP)

1465. Paper, 290x210mm, ff. 50. Gothic cursive. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r, incipit: ‘Qui incomenza el libro del famosissimo cavalieri meser Johanni de Mandavila de Ingletera del suo peregrinazo ultramare a Jerusalem’

fol. 49^r, colophon: ‘Qui finisce lo itinerario del famoso cavaleiro, miser Giovanni de Mandavilla de Ingletera dela cita de Sancto Albano. Scripto per mi, Bernardo del Pra da Parma, cancellero del magnifico domino Gandolfo di Rossi da Bologna, castelano del castello de Pavia, del’ano .M.cccc.lxv. del messe de marzo’

Manuscript fragments of the Italian version²

In addition to the witnesses described above, extracts from the Italian version of the *Book* appear in three sixteenth-century manuscript compendia:

Venice, Biblioteca Marciana Cod. Ital. VI 208

Ff. 160^r-164^r.

A compilation of texts pertaining to the eastern world, including the accounts of Odoric of Pordenone and Marco Polo and a number of extracts from the *Paesi nuovamente ritrovati* (1507). Includes an interpolation from the *Book* in Odoric’s *Itinerarium* and a number of individual extracts.

Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana MS 1910

Ff. 39^r-39^v.

The celebrated Codex Vaglianti, a compilation copied by the Florentine merchant Piero Vaglianti before 1514. Three extracts from the *Book* are appended to the account of Marco Polo. The manuscript also contains a number of New World reports and what may be the earliest surviving Italian translation of the Koran.

² All manuscripts consulted in person.

Lucca, Biblioteca Governativa MS 304

FF. 26^r-55^v.

A compilation of various texts including abridged extracts from the Book, produced in Lucca by an anonymous scribe. Bennett dates to a generic C16th (*The Rediscovery of Sir John Mandeville*, p. 322). However, the inclusion of a series of notes on prominent Lucchese families up to 1593 and an account of the death of Urban VII in 1590, both in the same hand, suggest that it was produced in the final decade of the century.

Manuscripts of the French Continental version³

Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana MS 816 (Mi)

Milan or Pavia, 1396. Parchment, 312x205mm, ff. 112+1.

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'Comme il soit ainssi que la terre doltre mer, cest assavoir la terre sainte la terre de promission, entre toutes lez autres soit la plus excellente et la plus dignet souveraine de toutes autres terres...'

fol. 109^r, colophon: 'Explicit li romans de messier Jean de Mandeville chevalier de la nassion dangleterre escript et acompli lan de grace .m.ccc.lxxxvi. le mercredi .xiiie. iour de septembre par la main de Richart Hemon clerc. Deo gracias'

Described by Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, pp. 69-72

Modena, Biblioteca Estense MS Francese 33 (Mo)

Milan or Pavia, 1388. Paper, 275x210mm, ff. 91+8.

fol. 4^r, incipit: 'Cy commence le livre Jehan de Mandeville chevalier lequel parle de lestat de la terre sainte et des merveilles quil ya veues. Cest le prologue. Comme il soit ainssy que la terre doltre mer, cest asavoir la terre sainte, que lendit la terre de promission entre toutes autres terres soit la plus excellente. Et la plus digne dame et souveraine de toutez autres terres...'

fol. 84^r, colophon: 'Explicit le romant messier Jehan de Mandeville de la nacion dangleterre escript et acomply lan de grace nostre seigneur mil.ccc.lxxxviii. le xe jour de decembre par la main maistre Pierre le Sauvage de Chaalons en Champagne maistre en ars demourant adonc a excellent et puissant Princesse la Duchesse de Touraine Contesse de Valoiz et de Beaumont'

³ All manuscripts consulted in person.

Described by Röhl, *Der livre de Mandeville im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, pp. 73-6.

Manuscripts of the Vulgate Latin version⁴

Belluno, Biblioteca Lolliniana (Seminario Gregoriana) MS 39 (Belluno)

1415. Paper, 307x210mm, ff. 1+60+1. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r: incipit: 'De itineratione terre promissionis et aliis mirandis. Primum capitulum. Cum terra Ierosolimitana terra promissionis filiorum dei, dignior cunctis mundi terris sit habenda multis ex causis...'

fol. 44^v, explicit: 'Leonixius scripsit. Explicit itinerarius a terra Anglie in partes Hyerosolimitanas et in ulteriores transmarinas edito primo in lingua gallicane a domino Iohanne de Mandeville milite suo autore anno Incarnationis Domini III^olv. In civitate Leodii. Et paulo post in eadem civitate in hanc formam latinam translatus. Scriptus per me Leonixium de Doyono de civitate Belluni decanum de mense octobris 1415. Quem scripsi in diebus qui[n]decim et explevi et quem intendo ponere ac ponam et iam posui in libraria cathedralis ecclesie Belluni apud alios olim meos libros cum eadem condicione cum undecimos libros in ibi posui et firmavi. Deo gratias. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.'

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. A. 187 (Oxford Latin)

1445, near Verona. Parchment and paper, 240x164mm, ff. 2+70. Contains marginalia.

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'Cum terra Ierosolimitana terra promissionis filiorum dei...'

fol. 66^r, explicit: 'Explicit Itineracionis a terra Anglie in partes Ierosolimitanas et in ulteriores transmarinas editus primo in lingua gallicana. A domino Johanne de Mandavilla milite suo auctore. Anno incarnationis domini M^o ccc^o 22^o. In civitate Leodii. Et paulo post in eadem civitate in hanc formam latinam translatus. Scriptus atque finitus in terra Colla de gardera e districtus Verrone trygesimo die mensis Iulii anni Millesimi Quadringentesimi Quadragesimi quinti. Qui me scribebat Anthonius nomen habebat. Deo gracias Amen'.

Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana MS D 46 Inf. (Milan Latin)

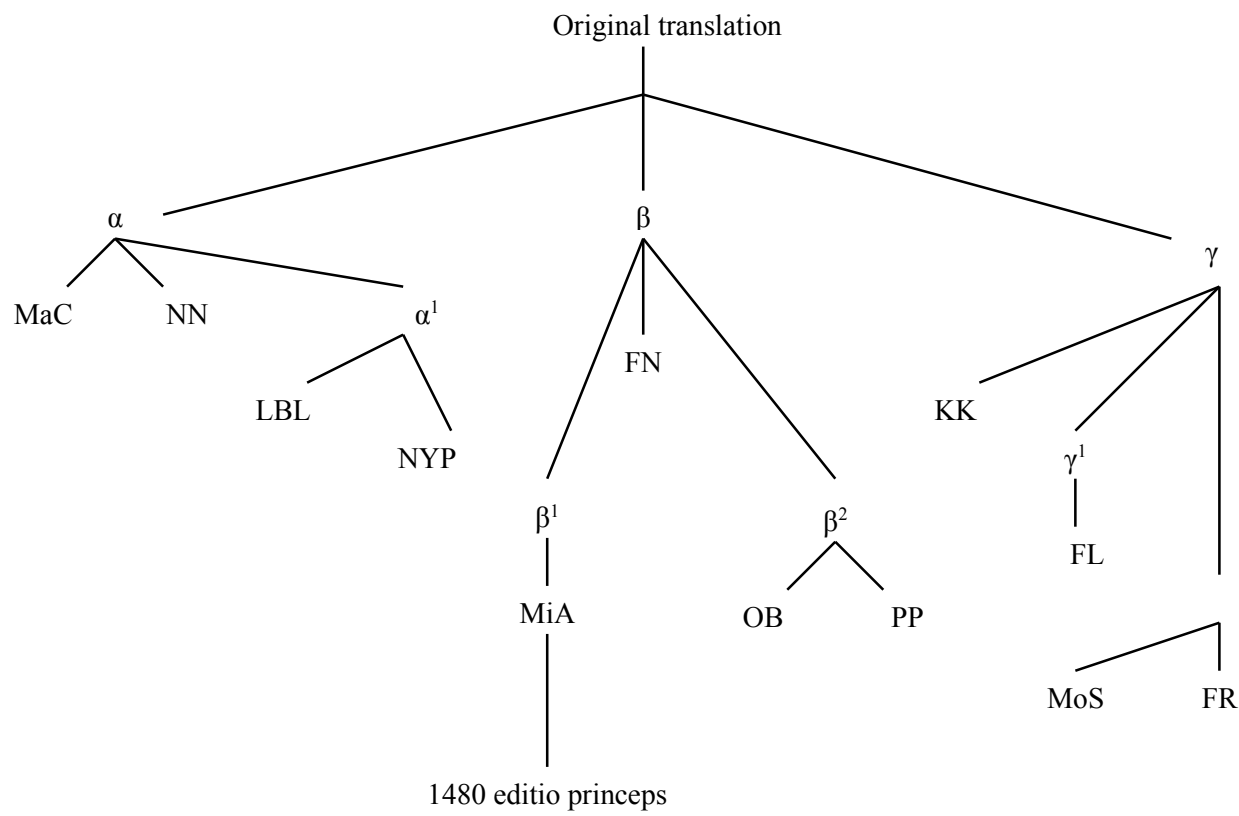
Fifteenth century. Paper, 300x220mm, ff. 1+56+1.

⁴ All manuscripts consulted in person.

fol. 1^r, incipit: 'Incipit itinerarius a terra Anglie in partes yerosolomitanas et in ultiores transmarinas editus primo in lingua gallicana a milite suo auctore anno incarnationis Domini millo trecentesimo quinquagesimo quinto iii in civitate Leodicum et paulo post in eadem civitate translatus in hanc formam latinam per magistri Johannis ad Barbam. Arctor de Sergnano scripsit'

Explicit itinerarius a terra Anglie in partes hyerosolomitane et in ultiores transmarinas editus primus in lingua galicana a domino Johanne de Mandevillie milite suo auctore anni de incarnationis [...] M[o] iii[c] l v iii civitate Leodi et paulo [...] in eadem civitate in hanc formam latinam translatus scriptus per me Arctorem clericum.

Stemma codicum for the Italian version of the *Book* ⁵



⁵ This diagram is based on that provided by Rossebastiano, *La tradizione manoscritta*, p. 51.

Italian printed editions of the *Book*

The following list details the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian editions of the *Book*. Where possible, several copies of each edition have been examined to ensure accuracy. In the case of V4, V5, V6 and V7, I have been unable to access the edition and details are therefore not supplied.

Pietro da Corneno: Milan, 31 July 1480 (M1)

4^o, a¹⁰ b-o⁸, ff. 114. Gothic. Text arranged in a single column, with unnumbered chapter headings.

A1^r, title: ‘Tractato de le piu maravegliose cosse e piu notabile che se trovano in le parte del mondo redute et collecte soto breuita in el presente compendio dal strenuissimo cavaliere speron d’oro Johanne de Mandavilla anglico nato ne la cita de Sancto Albano el quale secondo dio presencialmente a visitato quasi tute le parte habitabel de el mondo cossi fidelmente a notato tute quelle piu degne cosse che l’a trovato e veduto in esse parte et chi bene discorre questo libro avera perfecta cognitione de tuti li reami provincie natione e populi gente costumi leze hystorie e degne antiquitate con brevitade le quale parte da altri non sono tractate et parte piu confusamente d’alchun gran Valente homini son state tocate e a magior fede el prefato auctore in persona e stato nel 1322. in Yerusalem in Asia minore chiamata Turchia in Armenia grande e in la piccola in Sythia zoe in Tartaria in Persia in Syria o vero Suria in Arabia in Egipto alto et in lo inferiore in Libia in la parte grande de Ethiopia in Caldea in Amazonia in India mazore in la meza et in la minore in diverse sette de latini greci iudei e barbari christiani et infidele et in molte altre provincie como appare nel tractato de sotto.’

O8^v, colophon: ‘Explicit Johannes de Mandavilla impressus Mediolani ductu et auspiciis Magistri Petri de Corneno pridie Callendas augusti. MCCCCLXXX. Johane de Galeazo Maria Sfortia Vicecomitte Duce nostro invictissimo ac principe Jucondissimo.’

Ugo Ruggerio: Bologna, 1488 (B1)

4^o, a-l⁸ k¹⁰, ff. 90. Gothic. Two columns, unnumbered chapter headings. Space left for initials.

A1^v, title: ‘Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]’

K10^v, colophon: ‘Impressus Bononia per Ugonem Ruggerium anno domini .Mccccxxxvii.’

Ugo Ruggerio: Bologna, 4 July 1488 (B2)

4^o, a-k⁸, ff. 80. Gothic. Two columns, unnumbered chapter headings. Space left for initials.

A1^v, title: 'Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]'

K8^v, colophon: 'Impresso nel alma et inclita citade di bologna per me Ugo di Rugerii. Sotto al divo et illustrissimo principe e signore Giovanni secondo bentivoglio Sforcia di vescontidaragona Neli anni del Nostro Signore messer Iesu Cristo .Mcccc.lxxxviii. adi .iiii. di luglio.'

Nicolò Ferrari: Venice, 17 November 1491 (V1)

4^o, a-d⁸ e¹⁰ f-h⁸ i⁴, ff. 70. Gothic. Two columns, numbered chapter headings. Text is preceded by table of chapters.

A1^r, title: 'Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]'

A6^r-7^v: Table of chapters

I4^v, colophon: 'Impresso venetia per me Nicolo de li ferari de pralormo Piemontese stampador ne lano 1491 adi .17. novemberio.'

Lorenzo Morgiani and Johann Petri: Florence, 7th June 1492 (F1)

4^o, a-k⁸, ff. 80. Gothic typescript with large initials. Two columns, unnumbered chapter headings.

A1^r, short title: 'Tractato bellissimo delle piu maravigliose cose et piu notabile che si truovino nelle parte del mondo descripte et raccolte dallo strenuissimo Cavaliere asperondoro Giovanni Mandavilla Franzese che visito quasi tutte le parti del mondo habitabili ridocto in lingua Thoscana.' Followed by a woodcut depicting a king and his mounted retinue being greeted by a sage.

A2^v, full title: 'Tractato bellissimo delle piu maravigliose cose et piu notabile che si truovino nelle parte del mondo [...]'

K8^v, colophon: 'Finito il libro di Giovanni Mandavilla ridocto in lingua Toschana impresso nella excelsa cipta di Firenze per ser Lorenzo de Morgiani et Giovanni da Maganza a di .vii. di Giugno .M.cccc.lxxxxii.'

Giovanni Jacopo and Giovanni Antonio de Benedetti: Bologna, 18th July 1492 (B3)

4^o, a-g⁸, ff. 56. Gothic typescript with large initials. Two columns, numbered chapter headings.

A1^r: 'JOHANNE DE Mandavilla.'

A1^v, title: 'TRACTATO delle piu maravegliose cose et piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]'

G8^v, colophon: 'Impresse nella nobel cita de Bologna per mi Joanne iacobo et Joanne antonio di beneditti da Bologna ne lanno della christiana gratia .Mcccclxxxii. adi .xviii. de Luglio Sotto al divo et Illustrissimo principe e signore Giovanni secondo bentivoglio sfortia di vesconti daragona Regnante in cello e in terra iesu christo signore e salvatore nostro col suo eterno padre e spirito sancto al quale sia honore e gloria in secula seculorum Amen.'

Ulrich Scinzenzeler: Milan, 27th August 1496 (M2)

4^o, a-p⁴ q⁸, ff. 72. Gothic with large initials. Two columns, unnumbered chapter headings.

A1^v, title: 'Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che se trovano in le parte del mondo [...]'

Q8^v, colophon: 'Finisse el libro de Johane Mandavilla Impresso in Milano per Magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler ne lanno del signore .Mcccclxxxvi. a di .xxvii. del mese de Agosto.'

Manfredo Bonelli: Venice, 2nd December 1496 (V2)

4^o, a-n⁴ o⁶ p⁴, ff. 70. Gothic. Two columns, numbered chapter headings.

A1^r, title: 'Johanne de mandavilla. Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]' Surrounded by a decorative border with flora and two seated lions.

P4^r, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Zovane de Mandavilla el quale trata de le cose maravegliose del mondo. Stampado in Venexia per Maestro Manfredo da Monferato da Streuo da Bonello .M.CCCC.LXXXXVI. Adi .ii. del mese de decembrio. AMEN'.

Ulrich Scinzenzeler: Milan, 21st October 1497 (M3)

4^o, a-l⁴ m⁶, ff. 50. Gothic.

A1^r, title: 'Johanne de mandavilla. Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]' Surrounded by a decorative border.

M4^r, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Zovane de Mandavilla el quale trata de le cose maravegliose del mondo. Stampado in Milano per Maestro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nelano del .Mcccclxxxvii. a di .xxi. del mese de octobre'.

Ulrich Scinzenzeler: Milan, 6th December 149[?] M4

4^o, acbed-l⁴ m⁶, ff. 50. Gothic.

A1^r, title: 'Johanne de mandavilla. Tractato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo [...]' Surrounded by a decorative border.

M4^r, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Zovane de Mandavilla el quale trata de le cose maravegliose del mondo. Stampado in Milano per Maestro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nelano del .Mcccclxxxx[. a di .vi. del mese de decembre'.

Unknown printer for Piero da Pescia: Florence, before 1505 (F2)

4^o, a-k⁸, ff. 80. Gothica antiqua. Two columns.

A1^r, title: 'Tractato bellissimo delle piu maravigliose cose et piu notabile che si truovino nelle parte del mondo descripte et raccolte dallo strenuissimo Cavaliere asperondoro Giovanni Mandavilla Franzese che visito quasi tutte le parti del mondo habitabili ridocto in lingua Thoscana.' Frontispiece identical to F1.

K8^v, colophon: 'Finito il libro bellissimo di Giovanni Mandivilla ridocto in lingua Toschana impresso nella excelsa cipta di Firenze appetitione di Ser Piero da Pescia &c.'

Manfredo Bonelli and Giorgio Rusconi: Venice, 23 December 1500 (V3)

4^o, A-P⁴, ff. 59. Gothica antiqua. Two columns. Frame with Christ at top, figures and mythical creatures.

A1^r, title: 'Iohanne de Mandavilla. Tractato delle piu maravegliose cose e piu notabili che si trovino in le parte del mondo'

Pietro Martire da Mantegazza for Giovanni da Legnano: Milan, 26 June 1502 (M5)

4^o, a-g⁸ h², ff. 58. Gothica antiqua. Two columns. Woodcut frontispiece showing two armies either side of a river, with a walled city and ships in the background.

A1^r, title: 'Questo sie el libro de Iohanne de Mandavilla'.

Fol. 58^v, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Zovanne de Mandavilla el quale trata de le cose maravegliose del mondo. Stampado per Pedro Martiro de Mantegatii dito el Cassano. Ad impensa per magistrum Iohanne de Legnano. Mccccii. die .xxvi. lunii'.

Giovanni Battista Sessa: Venice, 1504 (V4)

16^o, a-n⁴, ff. 52. Further detail not supplied.

Manfredo Bonelli: Venice, 26 January 1505 (V5)

8^o, a-ee⁴, ff. 112. Further detail not supplied.

Melchiorre Sessa: Venice, 22 June 1515 (V6)

4^o, a-q⁴, ff. 68. Further detail not supplied.

Rocco Da Valle and brothers, for Niccolò Gorgonzola: Milan, 30 June 1517 (M6)

4^o, a-f⁸ g¹⁰, ff. 58. Gothica antiqua. Two columns.

Al^r: 'Questo sie el libro Johanne de Mandavilla'. Woodcut identical to M5, except reversed.

58^v, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de zovanne de Mandavilla el quale trata de le cose maravegliose del mondo. Stampato in Milano per Rocho e Fratelli da Valle ad Instantia de Meser Nicolo da Gorgonzola. M.ccccc.xvii. adi Ultimo de zugno.'

Melchiorre Sessa and Pietro Ravani: Venice, 1521 (V7)

8^o, a-p⁸, ff. 119. Further detail not supplied.

Luigi Torti: Venice, August 1534 (V8)

8^o, a-p⁸, ff. 119. Roman. Chapter table.

Al^r, title: 'Ioanne de Mandavilla. Trattato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo'.

P7^v, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Ioanne de Mandavilla, el qual tratta delle piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino, e come presentialmente ha cercato tutte le parte habitabile del mondo et ha notato alcune degne cose che ha veduto in esse parte. Stampato in Venetia per Alvise di Torti nell'ano del Signore MDXXXIII nel mese di Agosto'.

Alvise Torti: Venice, 1537 (V9)

8^o, a-p⁸, ff. 119. Roman. Chapter table.

Al^r, title: 'Ioanne de Mandavilla. Trattato de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino in le parte del mondo'.

P7^v, colophon: 'Qui finisse el libro de Ioanne de Mandavilla, el qual tratta delle piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che si trovino, e come presentialmente ha cercato tutte le parte habitabile del mondo et ha notato alcune degne cose che ha veduto in esse parte. Stampato in Venetia per Alvise Torti nell'anno del Signore MDXXXVII. nel mese di Otubrio.'

Niccolò Bascarini: Venice, October 1554 (V10)

8^o, a-p⁸, ff. 119. Roman. Chapter table.

Al^r, title: 'Ioanne de Mandavilla Qual tratta de le piu maravegliose cose e piu notabile che se trovino, e come presentialmente ha cercato tutte le parte habitabile del mondo, et ha notato alcune degne cose che ha vedute in esse parte. In Venetia M D L III' With small woodcut of a peacock.

P8^v, colophon: 'Qui finisce el libro de Ioanne de Manzanilla, el quale tratta delle piu meravigliose cose e piu notabile che se trovino, e come presentialmente ha cercato tutte le parte abitabile del mondo, et ha notato alchune degne cose che ha veduto in esse parte. Stampato in Venetia per Nicolo de Bascharini nell ano del Signore. M D L IIII. Nel mese di Ottobrio'.

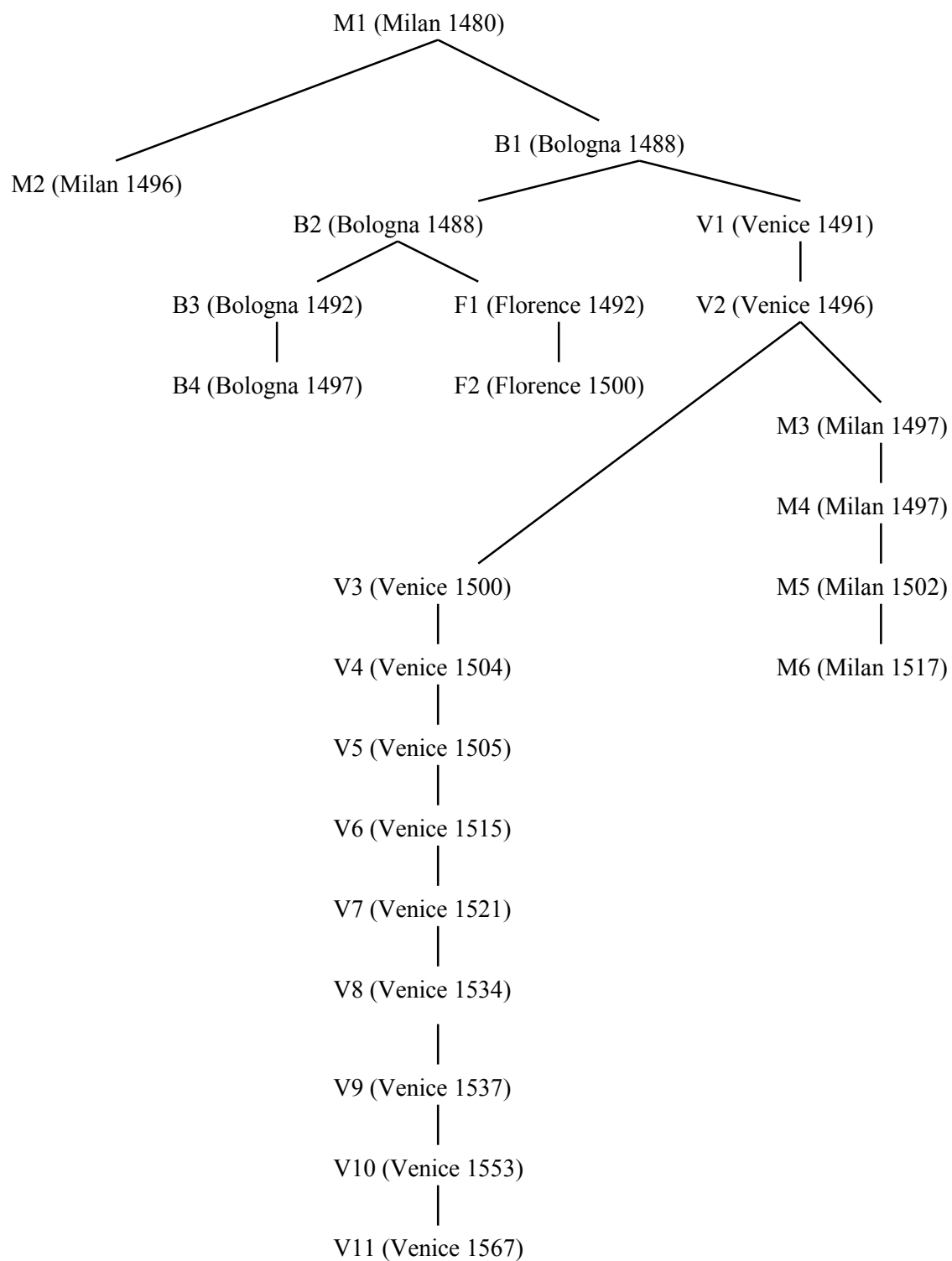
Andrea Muschio for Battista Mammello: Venice, 1567 (V11)

8^o, A-N⁸, O¹⁰, ff. 106. Roman.

A1^r: 'Ioanne de Mandavilla nel quale se contengono di molte cose maravigliose. Con la tavola di tutti i Capitoli che nella presente opera si contengono. Nuovamente stampato, e ricoretto. In Venetia MDLXVII. Illustration of a bust of Caesar.

No colophon.

Stemma for the Italian printed editions



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